NOVEMBER, 1916

TEN CENTS

THE BLACK CAT

THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING CO.
SALEM MASS.

Paragraphs From Our Own Portfolio

The Fixed Purpose of Our Souls

Do you remember how the Sunday School Superintendent used to get up along toward the end of the session, just when you were getting hungry, and ask, "What ought to be the fixed purpose of our souls?" And you wished that he wasn't so almighty particular about everybody's soul, including yours, when his own was rather a shriveled-up affair. Besides you were not interested in souls just at that moment. You were getting hungrier every minute. And what business was it of his anyway?

Everybody else stood up and answered, so you did too, without in the least knowing or caring what it was all about.

"What ought to be the fixed purpose of our souls? Huh? Oh, yes—'To be a worker together with God toward so great a good,'" etc. You mumbled along trying to keep up with the rest of the school, but never quite succeeding.

After that, they let you go home—a thoroughly prophylactic Christian, if there ever was one.

That disposes of your youth and brings us down to the present moment and more especially to the business of the present moment, which is to find out what really ought to be the fixed purpose of our souls as literati—or rather your soul.

You are buying THE BLACK CAT every month because you have always liked BLACK CAT stories. Yet you are a trifle uneasy, a bit critical. You think you would enjoy it a little more, if you could correct the editor's mistakes. In short, you think you should have his job; and he should be—well, you'd hate to tell him just what you think he should be doing for a living.

"If I were the editor," you begin.

"Is that so?" we want to know.

And right there we go to the mat together with the result that THE BLACK CAT CLUB is formed. It is created for just such people as you because we have a sneaking respect for your likes and dislikes in the way of fiction and want to know how you like THE BLACK CAT and THE THRILLER and what you know about the magazine business anyway.

So there you are.

Now what ought to be the fixed purpose of your soul? And the answer is—To Be a Worker Together With the Editor.

The BLACK CAT CLUB is merely the vehicle designed to make possible such ideal relations between editor and readers. Whether or not it flourishes depends largely upon the fixed purpose of your soul.

For full particulars see the full page advertisement.

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The Black Cat

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THE BLACK CAT CLUB

A CONTEST

The Black Cat Club is composed of writers, would-be writers and readers; in fact, any one interested in short stories either as a writer or reader, may become a member. The object of the club is to stimulate interest in short stories. There is no membership fee. A coupon is printed below for the convenience of each one desiring to become a member.

The first duties of members consist of reading The Black Cat and submitting to the club a list of the stories in each issue arranged according to their merit with reasons in the fewest number of words possible.

Cash Prizes for Writers and Readers

A Prize of $25 will be awarded to the author of the story which is selected as Best by the largest number of club members.

Prizes of $5.00 each will be awarded to the five members submitting the Best lists and reasons.

The First Contest comprises the stories in this issue (November) and all lists must be received at the office of The Black Cat, Salem, Mass., before December 1st. Prizes will be awarded December 5th, and result of the contest will be published in the February Black Cat issued January 15th. *Address all communications to*

THE BLACK CAT, SALEM, MASS.

CUT OUT THIS COUPON AND ATTACH TO YOUR ANSWER

Date _____

THE BLACK CAT CLUB,
Salem, Mass.

Please enroll me as a member of The Black Cat Club.

I have read the November Black Cat and enclose herewith a list of the stories arranged in the order of their merit with my reasons for this arrangement.

Name _____

Address _____

THE SKAGPOLE VENUS

BY STANLEY SHAW

A connoisseur of old masters invokes the aid of Hymen in securing the famous "Skagpole Venus" for his art gallery.

ISS Anita Maloney was tripping down Fifth Avenue on her way to Belford's Big Department Store, where she would spend the day behind the jewelry counter selling "Guaranteed $90 Diamond Rings, this day only $49.98."

Anita was a sight for tired eyes, refreshment for frazzled nerves and relief for saw-edged dispositions. They certainly do not come prettier than Anita anywhere on the Avenue, and that is saying considerable for the young lady. One look at Anita should have been enough to start any sensible young man to studying the house-furnishing goods windows. Her hair was the color of rich burnt umber and abundant, her complexion cream and rose, and her lips presented that crimson cupid's bow effect, alike the pride of artists and the despair of femininity in the flesh.

There may not have been any tremendous excess of gray matter behind Miss Anita Maloney's transcendent pulchritude, yet it is on record that amazing undertakings are often attempted on limited assets, and beauty minus may not, after all, be such poor capital for a penniless young lady just turned nineteen, especially if she have as a silent partner one of the richest men in the country.

Leaving Miss Anita Maloney, we must step across to West 86th Street, the home of Mr. John Thomas Derrington, said to be worth some fifty million dollars. Permit that satisfying sum to sink into your soul, but don't jump at conclusions: John Thomas has a wife fully capable of keeping him out of the clutches of designing beauties; furthermore, the passion of John Thomas's life is old masters, not young misses.

Vast wealth is popularly supposed to breed inefficient digestive apparatuses, insomnia and sour dispositions. In furtherance of a more equitable distribution of this world's needful, it is to be hoped that such is sometimes the case; truth compels the statement, however, that, in spite of his money, J. T. owned the digestion of an ostrich, a chronic propensity for sleeping like a husky infant and a perpetually sunny disposition. Quite a jolly, chaffing old millionaire was John Thomas, very fond of his jokes. Yet he was not thoroughly happy; the worm of discontent did sometimes gnaw at his vitals.

The cause of John Thomas's repining was that he did not possess the famous Skagpole Venus, and, though he did own a goodly share of

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all the other old masters a millionaire might desire, they all became as dead sea fruit when his mind dwelt on the unattainable one.

David Belford, proprietor of Belford's Big Department Store, owned the Skagpole Venus, so called because it once hung in the ancestral halls of the sixth Lord Skagpole, now deceased, before being sold to Belford, in order that the seventh Lord Skagpole might raise the necessary wherewithal to marry Letty Allerby of the Gaiety Theatre.

The Skagpole Venus, though still a beauty, was certainly beginning to show her age, if cracked varnish may be taken as evidence, yet these little matters dimmed not the soul within to her present owner, David Belford, in whose vast gallery she occupied the place of honor, despite frequent bids for her favor by John Thomas Derrington, who, up to the present hour, had offered as high as $50,000 for the square of canvas whereon she reclined.

To return to Miss Anita Maloney, who, by this time, had arrived at Belford's Big Department Store, deposited her outer wraps in the basement locker, and stood behind a crystal jewelry counter, clothed in trim black, with snowy collar and cuffs, prepared to dispense those guaranteed $90 diamond rings, this day only at $49.98. Though the month was July and the temperature hovered about the nineties, Miss Anita, appearing as cool, comfortable and perfect as the proverbial cucumber, was arranging a stray lock of her perfect coiffure, when her fellow salesgirl, Miss Levy, spoke in a guarded undertone:

"Get onto your job, Maloney, here comes that old snuffer to look at them emeralds again."

A "snuffer," in behind-the-counter parlance, is a shopper who goes purse-empty about from store to store, merely for the pure joy of looking—or perhaps in the interest of some rival concern—with no thought whatever of actual investment.

True, the gentleman coming had been in twice before to inspect an emerald necklace priced at $987.49, yet he was no snuffer, being none other than John Thomas Derrington, he of the fifty millions.

Next to priceless old masters, John Thomas loved perfect gems, and he had it in mind to present his only daughter, Alice, on her early arriving birthday, with an emerald necklace; but, being a very thrifty old gentleman—as you may gather from the fact of those fifty millions—he never invested until he had carefully weighed all matters pro and con.

Miss Anita Maloney assumed her very sweetest "charge customer" smile, while John Thomas coughed a sort of polite but perfunctory "Hem!" fumbled for his pince-nez, found the black ribbon, adjusted the lenses and spoke:

"I hesitate to trouble you again, young lady, but, if you do not mind, I should like to glance just once more at an emerald necklace you have, priced, I believe, at $887.49."

From pure force of habit, John Thomas subtracted a hundred dollars from what he well enough remembered to be the real price of the necklace. Miss Anita Maloney, rather taking to the thin, Punch-like face of

this clean, courtly old gentleman, smiled and corrected him.

"Those are very fine gems, sir," she continued pleasantly, placing the desired piece of jewelry in its immaculate velvet-lined case on the counter pad for Derrington's inspection. "Every stone is guaranteed perfect; they would cost you at least a half more than our price at any specialty store. Being a departmental establishment, we sell jewelry at department store profits, exactly as we do dry goods and groceries." Miss Anita, having attended the Belford School of Salesmanship very assiduously, knew just what to say.

Albeit John Thomas Derrington had twice before been in to examine these emeralds, he had but perfunctorily glanced at the salesperson showing them. He seldom gathered a more comprehensive idea of any salesperson's individual appearance than of the faces of his servants. Salespeople and servants were a mere matter of course with Derrington, man of mighty millions. Should one chance to have eyes like an owl, or a nose like an elephant, he might have been startled into attention; otherwise, they faded into the general landscape. Now, however, he was suddenly aware of something pleasing in the sweet voice expatiating on the attractions of the necklace.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the slightly startled man, who was feeling the extreme heat himself. "How cool and comfortable you seem this morning, young lady."

John Thomas had no definite idea why it was so, yet as he sensed Miss Anita Maloney's fresh beauty, it started him thinking of the Skagpole Venus. Perhaps it was because, in his eyes, both represented perfection.

"I have a contented mind," answered Miss Anita off-handedly. "The heat never troubles me."

"It appears not," added John Thomas. "But I might hazard a guess regarding something that does trouble you."

Miss Anita, knowing perfectly well that this dry, jolly old gentleman was not attempting a flirtation, looked perfunctory interest.

"Yes?" she inquired.

"I'll wager you are troubled with more sweethearts than a body could shake a stick at," answered John T. with a sage nod. "Or else the present day lads are nothing like as appreciative as they were in my time."

"You'd lose," answered Anita. "I haven't a sweetheart to my name."

"Umm-m, well, maybe they have changed," hummed John Thomas.

As his eyes were travelling again toward the necklace, he caught sight of a stout person stepping his way. He began to chuckle, holding up four outspread fingers and a thumb so that the man approaching might see them. This latter gentleman was David Belford, who made it a settled habit to walk once through each aisle of his vast department store daily.

Belford was short, pursy, fussy and florid. A bristling white moustache half hid his mouth and his head was bare of hair, save for a fast disappearing white ring below his ears. He caught sight of Derrington's upheld hand and shook his head in denial, knowing that John Thomas's gesture signified an added bid of

$5,000 for the Skagpole Venus.

This was a custom between the two whenever they met. John Thomas had but once made a verbal offer for the Venus, and that was $20,000. Since then his bids had mounted upward, by skips, of from one finger to five, representing thousands in real money, until it now stood at $50,000.

"You hard-hearted old reprobate," he squeaked, laughing as Belford approached. "Don't you ever mean to sell me that painting?"

"Well, now then, why should I sell it to you?" asked Belford, a controversial sort of chap, in a raspy, querulous voice. "I'm fond of it myself, and, really, you know, Derrington, you haven't offered me anything at all tempting yet."

"Bless my soul and body, man, tempting!" exclaimed John Thomas. "I daresay you'll make twenty-five thousand on the deal at my last offer. Is that what you call a decent department store profit? Eh, what, eh?" He turned and winked slyly at Miss Anita Maloney and, at sight of her beautifully placid features, seemed suddenly struck with an idea.

"Look here, Bel'," he exclaimed, tapping that gentleman on one fat shoulder. "Have you any sporting blood in you? I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll wager my 'Dance of the Hamadryades' against your 'Venus,' the winner to have the loser's picture at $20,000. What do you say?"

The department store man coughed throatily, and his florid features became a few shades brighter.

"Well, now then, Derrington, what is your idea of a fairish wager?" he asked interestedly.

"My 'Dance of the Hamadryades' against your 'Venus' I can tell you who your son marries," snapped John Thomas.

Belford jumped; the thing struck him almost in a heap. Freddie Belford, apple of his father's eye, had only just arrived at marriageable age, and the elder Belford had never yet thought of matrimony in connection with his only son.

"Now then, look here, Derrington, you're taking an unfair advantage," he finally sputtered. "Frederick isn't likely to marry anybody for some time. If you know about any clandestine love affair my boy has become entangled in you ought to tell me of it without putting a price on your information." His voice was a trifle wheedling as he concluded, for this had hit him in a very tender spot.

"Information is altogether too valuable to part with without making a decent department store profit," chuckled Derrington, winking again at Miss Maloney.

Belford studied the subject again. He was morally certain Frederick had no idea of marrying; yet, if so be it he had, Belford would almost be willing to part with the Skagpole Venus, merely to know the maiden's name, also, he had always coveted Derrington's "Dance of the Hamadryades," and $20,000 for that painting was a low figure.

"Well, now then, Derrington, I think I shall have to take you up there," he rasped. "Who is Frederick going to marry?"

"Wait, wait," protested canny John Thomas. "We must have this thing down in black and white. I'll write

the young woman's name—not that I claim she is young, you understand—on a slip of paper, seal it in an envelope, and you may put the envelope in your office safe. If Frederick marries within six months, open the envelope. If I have named the girl, the Skagpole Venus is mine at $20,000. If I have failed to name her correctly, or Frederick doesn't marry within six months, 'The Dance of the Hamadryades' is yours at the same figure. That's more than fair, Bel'; you have two chances to my one; he may not marry, or, if he does, I may not call the name of the bride."

Belford yanked nervously at his white moustache, vexed to find he was not to hear the young woman's name at once. "Dammit, what *does* the old file know?" he thought. "That's a queer wager, but, at least, if Frederick doesn't marry in six months I'll know who Derrington is hinting at." "Aloud, he said, "Well, all right, Derrington. I'll take you up there."

Paper and envelope being secured from the stationery department, John Thomas, a letter sheet laid atop of the jewelry counter behind which Miss Anita Maloney still waited to serve his wishes, was about to write when Belford heard something that made him listen acutely.

"Young lady, what is your name?" asked John Thomas in guarded tones of Miss Maloney as he poised his pen.

Belford, having his back toward John T. was not aware of it, but Derrington, as he put his question to the salesgirl, covertly observed the department store owner through one corner of a very wise eye, carefully estimating the distance between that man and himself. Perhaps he imagined Belford might suddenly leap forward and wrest that bit of paper from his hands the instant the name was imposed thereon; then, again—but the pretty salesgirl was answering.

"Anita May Maloney," she replied sweetly.

John Thomas wrote down something, folded the paper painstakingly, slipped it inside the envelope, dated and memorandumed it and handed the sealed sheet to Belford, who accepted it with an obviously puzzled air and an unmistakably shaky hand. For the first time since she had been employed in his store, he looked at Miss Anita Maloney and was profoundly impressed with her compelling beauty.

"Good God!" he thought. "Can it be possible there is anything between my Frederick and this person? I'll have to look into matters with the boy, right away."

"Tuck that in your safe, Bel'," chuckled Derrington. "And, remember: not to be opened unless Frederick marries within six months."

As Belford walked away, so bewildered by this odd and unexpected turn of events that he could with difficulty realize whether he was walking on his hands or his feet, John Thomas gave his attention to Miss Anita Maloney and the emerald necklace. The salesgirl, formerly a mere shadow merging into the general landscape of John Thomas's life, had now become a personality.

"I think you may have that necklace wrapped up," he said, "and I will take it with me. Here is my card. I believe my family has an account here. And, let me add, if the good wish

does not give offense, that a young lady as pretty as yourself deserves better fortune in the matter of sweethearts."

"But what can a poor girl do if the boys don't come and propose?" smiled Miss Maloney as she accepted John T.'s card and proceeded to make out a charge slip for the floorman's approval.

"Tut, tut," laughed Derrington. "As if you didn't know you have the whole thing in your own hands, what? Eh, what?"

Miss Maloney shook her handsome head doubtfully.

"I'll tell you what, young lady," declared John Thomas, "I'll make it an object for you, yourself, to prove I'm right. If *you* marry within six months I'll make you a present of the handsomest dinner ring in New York."

"I'm sure you're very generous," answered Miss Maloney in a rather noncommittal way, handing John T. his wrapped package. "I hope you won't forget it; but I'm afraid there is little chance for me."

Leaving John Thomas to journey homeward, and Miss Anita Maloney to go back to the business of selling guaranteed $90 diamond rings, this day only $49.98, we must proceed to the home of David Belford, where, as may be surmised, a most uncomfortable half hour awaited Mr. Frederick.

In the Belford library, a rather somber but ornate room, finished in carved mahogany and tooled Spanish leather with bronze lighting fixtures and wood-green draperies at windows and doors, David himself fidgeted nervously back and forth before the huge pyramid fireplace in expectation of the momentary entrance of his son, whom he had had summoned to the presence.

Frederick entered, a fine, well set up young fellow, broad of shoulder and blonde of head, yet a young man not yet completely over the embarrassing knowledge of possessing uncomfortable hands and feet; a knowledge further complicated by an alarming propensity of the face assuming the color of a fresh-cut beet at the slightest provocation, and of the tongue to suddenly feel so large that it seemed to completely fill the mouth, making coherent speech difficult. In a word, Frederick was diffident.

The failing of fathers, especially fathers with money, is common knowledge. David Belford already suspected the worst; yet, since he really loved this handsome lad, he began gently.

"Now then, Frederick, my boy, what's all this I hear about marriage?" he asked.

As has before been intimated, an easy flow of language was not one of Frederick's long suits, less so under stress of excitement than upon ordinary occasions. His face promptly assumed the rubicund appearance of a newly spanked infant and he could only stammer:

"Ma-marriage, poppa; great heavens!"

Certainly this might be called a non-committal statement, however you interpret it; yet, in David Belford's mind, it became an almost complete confession of guilt. He began to rave and sputter like fat over a blazing fire.

"Now then, Frederick, I won't have it, that's all there is about it," he finally

ended up, explosively. "Almost anybody but one of my salesgirls. I won't have it, Frederick,—Anita May Maloney! The name is enough. Sounds like a girl from the Follies."

"Anita May Maloney!" Frederick finally managed to stammer. "Why, poppa, I never saw her."

"What, what?" exclaimed Belford, his puffy-lidded eyes opening wide. Surely Derrington's inference was as plain as the nose on his face, he thought, yet the earnestness of his son's tone made him pause and produced a slight ray of hope. "Never saw her!" he repeated. "Frederick, are you lying to me?"

"Of course not. Why on earth should I lie about it?" answered the young man indignantly. "Poppa, I should think you'd gone crazy."

David studied the matter a moment. "Well, now then, Frederick," he finally said, speaking more mildly. "You come down to the shop tomorrow and see the girl; she's in the jewelry department. She really is handsome, and you may know her under some other name. If you assure me, after you see her tomorrow, that you've never known her, I'll believe you."

Thus did it happen that Frederick Belford entered his father's famous departmental establishment on the following morning and inquired of a floorman the direction to the jewelry section, blushing meanwhile as though he were about to face a battery of beauties, instead of but one. The floorman, not having the remotest idea who the young man was, guided him gently toward the ring counter, winked a facetious aside at the salesgirl there and said:

"Wedding rings, sir? Yes, sir, Miss Maloney will show them to you."

Frederick caught the name, caught the inference, gave one glance at the ravishing young woman before him and fled, his former blushes being as the palest of pink sunsets to the roseate flush that now suffused his burning face. But he had proceeded no farther than the stationery section when he stalked into the arms of the senior Belford himself.

"Well, now then, Frederick, did you see her?" inquired David of his son.

"Of course I saw her," was Frederick's indignant reply as his face assumed its normal hue. "And I give you my word, poppa, I never before set my eyes on the girl."

"Well, then, that's enough," declared Belford, tremendously relieved. "I must have misunderstood Derrington."

"Der—Derrington!" stammered Frederick, falling into a new pit of embarrassment. "What has he got to do with it?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing," answered Belford. "The old file made a funny wager with me, that's all; said he knew who you would marry within six months, and I thought he hinted pretty strong at its being one of my salesgirls; but the matter's ended now; we won't say any more about it. It was probably one of those stupid jokes Derrington is so fond of cooking up."

So Freddie Belford motored home in a very mixed state of mind and Miss Anita Maloney thought what a fine, manly young fellow he was to show such extreme embarrassment at the mere mention of wedding rings.

That very evening, as it happened, Miss Anita Maloney was requested to work over-time by Brace, the jewelry buyer. She, knowing her rights, lodged a vigorous protest with the superintendent. The latter gentleman, never having paid much previous attention to Anita, but now realizing that such pretty salesgirls for the jewelry counter were not easy to obtain, perceived the force of her argument and promptly told Brace to back up. All of which may not, at first thought, appear as matter germane to this particular chronicle, but, as will appear later, really has a rather important bearing on subsequent developments.

A period of some two months must be permitted to elapse before we can again take up the thread of events.

It was early September. David Belford, making his usual morning tour through the aisles of his store, paused at the ring counter, aware of a strangely unfamiliar aspect there. For a moment, he stood pulling at his bristling white moustache, attempting to puzzle out what particular thing was not as it should be. Suddenly he hit upon it; Miss Anita Maloney, she of the big brown orbs and the Cupid's bow lips, was not present.

For a brief moment, David Belford appeared in imminent danger of apoplexy; but it was not wholly Miss Maloney's absence that took his breath up short and made his heart pound an extra beat to the second; it was the icy recollection that his son, Frederick, had also been most unaccountably absent from home on the day and night previous.

Came forward Brace, the jewelry buyer, and to him Belford put the question that was filling his soul with a half dozen different varieties of anguish.

"Now then, Brace, what has became of the rather prettyish salesgirl you had on rings?" inquired Belford. "McGuffy—Mahoney—ah, umm—Maloney! Yes, Miss Maloney, that was her name."

Brace fixed his eyes on a given point midway between his chief and the ring counter and wondered what Belford was really driving at. Having been away on a foreign buying trip for several weeks, he did not know why Miss Maloney was not present; but, catching sight of Miss Julia Levy, he informed his chief that he would inquire. Thus answered Miss Levy:

"Gee, Mr. Brace, didn't you know? Maloney give in her notice more'n a week ago. She got hitched up last night."

Belford heard. "What!" he bellowed, and then fled with a speed that almost equalled that with which his own son had once quitted the same counter. Something assured him the worst had happened. He stumbled into his private office, gripped the desk telephone and called for two-three-six Riverside, his town house.

"Has Frederick arrived home yet?" was the question he hurled into the mouthpiece.

The silky voice of Fanning, his butler, answered from the other end of the wire. "I do not know, sir, but I will find out at once."

Belford dropped into a chair and began to drum impatiently with fat fingers on the mahogany desk. He was beginning to see a little more

clearly. While he did not suspect his son of having lied in the matter, he did harbor a suspicion that wily old John Derrington had worked a rather clever scheme on him, using him as a medium to bring two young people together, calculating on human nature to do the rest.

"Dammit! Dammit!" he sputtered. "I'll get even with that old file if it takes me twenty years and half my fortune."

His volcanic meditations were interrupted by Fanning's voice on the wire, his tones now visibly perturbed and politely hesitating. "Mr. Belford? Ah, yes sir. I believe Mr. Frederick is not expected home today, sir," he said. "Yes sir, he has been heard from to that effect himself, sir, I believe."

"I knew it, I knew it," stuttered Belford, exasperated almost to the point of another apoplectic shock. "Now then, Fanning, don't beat about the bush. He's married, isn't he, run off with some young hussy?"

"Well sir, I believe that is what it amounts to, sir, though the madame is out, sir, and my information comes solely from her maid." answered the butler.

Belford waited to hear no more. Dropping the instrument, he stormed wildly back and forth beside his desk, calling the direst extremes of vengeance upon the defenseless head of John Thomas Derrington. In the midst of this tirade, John Thomas Derrington himself was announced.

"Show him in, Danvers, show him in," barked Belford, his blue eyes snapping fire, while he spread ten gripping fingers, as if Derrington's throat were already within his grasp.

It is difficult to beat up a man who meets you with the sunniest of smiles; nay, more; it is impossible, no matter how hot your anger, as David Belford discovered the instant John Thomas entered, his thin, Punch-like features contorted into the most roguish of grins as he poked Belford between two heavily upholstered ribs with a lean finger.

"So you've opened it, have you?" he said. "Well, what did I tell you? Eh, what, eh? Here's my check for $20,000, Bel'; you may send the Venus over to my gallery right away."

Having found he could not deliberately strike this cheery old man, Belford attempted to engulf him in denunciation.

"Derrington, you conscienceless old rascal," he raved. "You very well know Frederick had no idea of marriage until you deliberately caused me to put the idea into his head. It was a low-down trick. If you were a younger man, I'd—I'd—"

"What, eh, what?" interrupted John Thomas in astonishment. "I thought you'd like the idea. The boy is much better off married. To be sure, an elopement isn't just the proper thing; but why not let the young folks have their fun? Eh, why not, eh?"

Belford could only sputter; words adequate to the occasion he could not find.

"Oh, well, Bel', you'll get used to it," continued John Thomas. "I didn't think you'd take the loss of the 'Venus' so hard, or I'd never made the wager. But a bet's a bet. Come, shake hands, we ought to be friends."

His anger made Belford refuse, and John Thomas had to leave without the desired salutation, but there was a tremendously pleased twinkle in his eyes as he went out.

For almost an hour, Belford sat alone at his desk meditating on what a mess his son had got into and how best to extricate him. Finally, an idea occurred to him. He would have just one look into that envelope, to make certain everything was all right. In a moment, he had secured it from his office safe. Ripping open the folded sheet, Belford's eyes became almost as big as butter plates. He hurried to get 900 West 86th Street, Derrington's town house, on the telephone, and insisted on having Derrington himself at the wire.

"Now then, Derrington," he fairly roared, "this joke has gone far enough. What the devil did you mean by handing me that check for $20,000, when you had written your daughter Alice's name on the paper you left in my safe? Frederick hasn't married Alice; he eloped last night with a doll-faced salesgirl named Anita May Maloney."

For several seconds, all that Belford could hear over the wire was the rattling chuckle of some one who appeared to be either choking or to have heard what he considered a capital jest. Coherent words finally did reach Belford's ears.

"Oh, no, Bel'," came the thin voice of John Thomas Derrington, "Miss Maloney hasn't carried off your son; she has married your young superintendent. I happen to know because she just reminded me of a promise I made her some time ago. Frederick has married Alice; they'll be home a week from Saturday. Goodbye."

For the Christmas number we have two stories that just radiate the spirit of the season.

CAPTAIN HARDTACK AND THE VELVET PRINCE, *by Mabel S. Merrill* is a story which is remarkable for its characters. Few stories of the length of this one are so strong in this respect, not to mention the artistic blending of humor and pathos. You will love the Captain and "Rosyleen" and you will like the Prince, too, and "Brickdust" Macaulay and "Angel" McGrath.

WIRELESS FROM CHEYENNE, *by George Thomas Armitage* is the other holliday story. A cowboy faces the problem of providing a Christmas present for his girl after losing his money by a disastrous investment in red, white and blue chips.

A BULL MARKET IN FIDDLES

BY J. BERNARD LYNCH

In which a couple of Bulls break loose in the fiddle market. Prices soar, and Uncle Myer hitches his wagon to a "Strad."

UNCLE MYER, first aid to the financially afflicted, displayed unwonted interest as he mentally inventoried a customer, while leaning patronizingly across the glass showcase.

That customer was tall, gaunt, emaciated; his hair long and straggly, the chalky color of his face accentuated by bright, sparkling light in big brown eyes. The age advertised by plentiful streaks of gray strands was repudiated by a youthful figure and nervous energy evidenced in every movement.

With apparent effort, he raised a violin case from the floor and laid it across the counter. Then after a sigh he relaxed his grip and, with a gesture of despair, allowed his gaze to travel questioningly toward the pawnbroker.

"Well," asked the keeper, "do you want a loan or is it for sale?"

"A loan," answered the man, wearily. "It's my all, but soul hunger must wait until human need is satisfied."

The pawnbroker, with business-like brusqueness, snapped open the catch and made ready to uncover the offering.

"Pardon me," interposed the man, "this is an instrument of delicate and artistic construction, and must be handled with care. In fact—it is an old master!"

Slowly, as if drawing forth a precious treasure, the man laid the violin on the counter. He then looked toward the pawnbroker, as if anticipating that the exhibition would enforce enthusiastic admiration.

The pawnbroker, to whom all instruments perhaps looked alike, blinked disinterestedly and asked, "How much do you want?"

"Listen," said the man, impressively, as he raised the instrument from the counter and tucked it, in a peculiar manner, under his chin. "You fail to value this treasure, but the violin will make you understand."

He drew the bow across the strings slowly, and the eulogy he could not convey in words he put into tones and half tones. A merry lilting waltz enlivened the sombre atmosphere and regaled the varied collection of misfortune's trophies. The man and melody bespoke mastery in the medium of expression and the pawnbroker's grim look softened as he felt the appeal dominating the strains.

The music ceased with soft plaintiveness and the player laid the instrument on the counter.

"You see," he offered, indulgently, "it bespeaks the mellowness of bygone years; it is a heritage of master workmanship. But even though it's

my soul, my heart, my life, we must part for a while. Although the value of such an instrument as this should be counted by thousands, I ask but a trifle. To get too much might keep us apart too long, for genius is often hungry and fortune is a fickle jade. Let me have three dollars until the ghost walks."

With an expression of relief the pawnbroker, after a causual examination, turned to the desk and, securing his customer's name and address, passed money and pawn ticket across the counter.

The grotesque customer moved slowly toward the door and then stopped. "Pardon me," he said, as he retraced his steps, "I trust you appreciate how important the safe keeping of that violin is. Being delicate it is extremely sensitive to heat and cold. It is also affected by darkness. It must have light and air. Would you mind hanging it up somewhere?"

"I will store it in the back room," answered the pawnbroker. "It is both sunny and airy there."

The violin owner shook his head protestingly, as if doubting the character of the back room. "There's a good place right above the counter," he said; "would you mind hanging it up?"

"All right," answered the pawnbroker, impatiently, and after placing the case under the counter he hung the violin where designated, while the man looked on approvingly. Then, after profuse thanks, the odd customer departed.

And with the service lubricated by demands of other customers, Uncle Myer forgot the violin and its strange-looking owner.

Two days later he smiled a welcome to a gentleman whose personal appearance breathed money begetting confidence. As the demands for loans had been unusually large during the day, the pawnbroker beamed pleasantly when his customer requested to see a diamond ring from the window display.

The man studied the ring reflectively, and with the aid of a pocket microscope viewed the sparkling gem.

"The stone is good," he admitted, "but I find, on closer examination, the setting is an inferior copy of one I already have in my collection, for that reason it does not interest me."

"Don't be in a hurry, mister," said the pawnbroker, in an agony at the prospect of losing a sale. "Look around. Possibly you'll see something else you'll like."

The man paused, rather bored, and sent his glances wandering indifferently over the many pledged articles in evidence. The pawnbroker could see that nothing really attracted him. What a pity the ring had not been salable. Uncle Myer thrust it back into the window with a peevish sniff. At the same time he made up his mind not to let that customer escape without buying something. He felt his mercantile honor was involved in the affair.

"At any rate," he told himself, "he didn't go out. What is it he looks at now?"

The stranger's gaze had come to a halt above the counter. It remained there while Uncle Myer turned and looked at the same object.

No word was spoken for so long a while that the spirit of the pawnshop, always lying in wait for a moment when human influence ceases to dominate, had a chance for expression. Uncle Myer feared these moments. When he was there by himself he tried to avoid them by whistling, 'phone talks, or strolls to the door, whence he could overhear the busy street. The pledges were now in full power. Each clock ticked its loudest, each bit of bric-a-brac rang true to a vibration, a mandolin string snapped, an antique cabinet creaked as if to say "I could a tale unfold—"

And then a word was spoken—one word, no more.

"Stradivarius!"

Myer's heart thumped. (Did the stranger say it—could a man speak when his lips did not move?) Myer almost believed he had said it himself—only, as it happened, 'twas a word with which he had small acquaintance. Shaking off the weird influence of the silence, he cleared his throat and looked commandingly at the customer. To his relief, the latter spoke at once in a business-like manner.

"That violin," he remarked, "looks rather interesting. My special fad is gems, but I like to look at instruments. I have an idea that one might be unique."

"Sorry, mister," said the pawnbroker, "but that violin is not for sale. It's a pledged article, and only here two days. But I've other instruments. Maybe—"

The man made a gesture of irritation. "No," he said, sharply, "I don't care to waste time on ordinary modern fiddles. Of course that may be nothing more, but I fancied—at least, I'd like to examine it. But if it's not on sale—never mind!"

And he turned toward the door. Could Uncle Myer let him go, thus, taking with him a pawnbroker's prestige and also (perhaps) several dollars' profit? No, Uncle Myer could not!

"Come back," he called, "oh, please come back. I'll take it down—sure there's no harm in just letting you look it over. Then you can tell me what it's worth; and I know you'll be careful handling it. The owner warned me it was delicate."

The pawnbroker watched with deep attention as the customer weighed and examined the instrument, but it was with hope that the violin would be found wanting, as the ring had been. Then the pawnbroker would try him with an amber necklace or a mosaic brooch. These collectors were likely to buy anything.

At first it seemed as if the violin were anything but satisfactory, for after taking it to the door and looking it over in the light from the street, it was brought back and laid aside with seeming carelessness. Still, the customer made no move to depart, and after complaining because there was no fly in the amber, the mossaic was condemned as "modern," his attention reverted to the violin.

"So it's not for sale?" said the customer, slowly. "Well, I'm sorry. I've taken up a lot of your time, and I'd like to see you paid for your courtesy. But—what can a man do when the only object he cares for is 'not for sale'?"

Uncle Myer sighed in disgust, even

while he wondered if the man wanted the violin, or was only trying to cover his exit neatly.

"Would you really like the fiddle?" he asked. "Do you see something of value in it?"

The man turned guiltily from his amorous gaze at the combination of wood, glue and strings, and put on what seemed to the pawnbroker an obvious assumption of nonchalance.

"Oh, I don't know," he remarked, "as it's really worth anything. It's only curious, I guess. Still, I'd be willing to venture a bid on it, just to reward you for your time and because my collection lacks a violin."

Uncle Myer remembered the hungry look of the old-young man, and convinced himself he could do everyone a good turn.

"What'll you give," he whispered, "if I can induce the owner to sell? He prized it very highly, I remember, so he'll be hard to handle. I must be able to make him a good offer."

"I don't know what your idea is of a good offer," said the collector. "I'd scarcely care to go five hundred. If that would tempt you, and you can get it for a trifle less from him, let me know. Here's my card. I'm at the Copley Hotel for a week."

He went out, leaving Uncle Myer mentally stunned. He had actually expected the customer to stop at "five" —and he had gone on to "hundred" as calmly as if ordering weinersnitzel in a delicatessen shop.

Myer took up the violin and tried to look into its inner economy. At the same time he gave himself explanatory information.

"An old master he said you were," he observed, "and didn't like the dark. So I should hang you where you'd get the air. And an old master you must be if a man wants you for five hundred. How'd he put it? 'I'd scarcely care to go above five hundred.'"

The shop had grown quiet again, despite Myer's self communings and suddenly his heart gave the familiar pound, just as it had done a half hour before when a mysterious word floated on the air.

What was that word—Stradivarius! And what association had it in the mind of Myer?

An encyclopedia had come into the shop in flotsam from a library. Myer hauled down the volume "Pue to Strad" and solved the puzzle. A "Strad" was a violin, "an old master," probably of fabulous worth. The stranger suspected this of being one. The word had been pumped into the air inadvertently. Instead of cheating himself by paying five hundred, he would be trying to cheat Uncle Myer. Well, the first thing to do was to get that fiddle into one's hands. Then "business" could be talked to that "collector," and perhaps when the violin changed hands more than a paltry five hundred would do likewise.

While trying to decide on what pretence the owner could be invited to the pawnshop without arousing suspicion, that down-and-outer crossed the threshold of his own volition. And he wore what Uncle Myer diagnosed as a lean and hungry air.

"Say," he pleaded, "I'm whipped clean again, and I've got to have an extra two dollars. My ship is still

pounding its nose off beyond the coast of plenty. Can you add another two spot to the violin incumbrance?"

"Well, maybe," considered the pawnbroker. "Or—perhaps you'd sell the violin?"

"And perhaps I wouldn't think of anything of the kind," was the immediate reply. "Guess you don't know the soul of art that is held in bondage for want of a few dollars. No, mister, you can't appreciate the heaven of music that is imprisoned in that violin. If I sold it I would be selling all that is dear in the world to me."

The pawnbroker's face hardened and his eyes glinted covetously. "Then I can't be bothered," he answered, indifferently. "No more can I give you as a loan. To buy I'll give you a good price."

The man, taken aback by this cavalier treatment, turned and gazed ruefully toward the street. "I must have money to live," Myer heard him whisper. And then he wrung his hands, afterward passing them over his eyes as if to drive away a bad dream. Then. "Well, how much will you give?" he jerked out, desperately.

"Maybe ten or fifteen dollars," said the pawnbroker, cautiously. "I would risk the fifteen because you say it has value."

The man's answer was a sob that turned into a derisive chuckle. "Fool," he sneered, "that violin is worth thousands—indeed, is priceless. But I cannot starve—give me three hundred and I'll sacrifice it."

The pawnbroker raised his shoulders and inclined his head while an indulgent smile spread over his features. "For an old fiddle, three hundred dollars! Please don't joke in business hours."

"See here," said the man decisively, "you heard my offer. It was wrung from me by hunger—that alone. If you cannot accept it say so before another minute. I will go out among my friends; surely they will aid me to live until such time as I am able to redeem it." He paused to give the pawnbroker opportunity to think, then said, "The minute is up— what is your decision?"

The pawnbroker, still deliberating, allowed his customer to reach the door before he called him back. "Stop, stop, please," he cried. "I can—I can give you a hundred and fifty. It's all the money I have in the store. A princely offer, and one I shall not make again."

The man made as if to depart, then, as the door opened to admit another customer, he squared his shoulders, bit his lips, and moaned, "Give me the money."

Waiting only long enough to count the bills tendered him, and to surrender his pawnticket, he hastened away, his very back suggestive of a burden of lifetime regret. Myer allowed but one pang of sympathy to intrude on his self-congratulation. After all, a hundred and fifty was a bunch of money, and if the poor fellow didn't know he was selling a "Strad" he would realize that he had been well paid—when he came to think it over. "An old master!" cooed Myer to his purchase, and longed to fondle it all night.

An hour after opening up next morning, Myer went to the telephone and, thrilling under the glow of com-

mercial conquest, asked for the Copley Hotel. When the connection was made he inquired for Mr. James, the name on the card.

"Don't know him," came back over the wire, after several minutes of waiting. "We have no guest of that name stopping here."

Uncle Myer hung up the receiver weakly, as a disquieting thought crowded upon him. He rushed wildly to the hotel, but there was nothing to add to the telephone conversation. Inquiry at other hotels brought no hope. Mr. James was an unknown person.

Toward his three-ball establishment Uncle Myer moved mechanically and when he had entered he found a seat. His suspicions developed into facts. Sadly from the safe he took the violin and hung it back on the hook, while all and sundry among the pledges seemed to join in the sneer, "An old master!"

"It's a new game for the crooks," Myer soliloquized. "And I it had to be that should be the victim and lose my hundred and fifty. What a slick pair of Jesse Jimmies."

No sooner had he reported the fraud to police headquarters than he received a visit from Max Klein, a neighboring pawnbroker. "Say, Goldman," asked Klein, as he entered, "did you get caught on the new violin game?"

"What business, tell me, is it of yours?" groaned Goldman. "For the post mortem cackle you come round."

"I came for the reason that misery likes company," said Klein. "They got me for a hundred and twenty-five. And you?"

"A hundred and fifty," reluctantly admitted Goldman. "Twenty-five dollars you're better off than I am."

"Who wouldn't get caught?" said Klein, consolingly. "They were a nifty pair of actors. Show me your fiddle."

Goldman obeyed, and then Klein shook his head knowingly. "Just like mine, a cheap new fiddle, fixed up to make it look old and valuable.

"I'll bet they're breathing a balmier climate by now," he gloomed, before returning to his own place.

When Goldman had made his day's report to the police and locked up securely, he wandered toward the white light district. He felt versed in the weaknesses of the unrighteous, and thought it just possible the pair who had duped him might be lingering where the cafés harbored the cabarets. Two hours of Sherlocking somewhat damped his ardor. He decided to begin to enjoy himself, sat down and ordered refreshments with which he really intended to refresh himself. An orchestra of three pieces, cornet, violin and piano, was playing an enticing waltz, and playing it well, considering the place and the hour. A very pretty girl adorned the piano stool, and the cornetist, an elderly chap, took such good care of her that Goldman thought he must be her father. The violinist stood outside the family group, fiddling cleverly. Goldman liked him because he was so different from the man who had pawned the fiddle. He should never care for pale men with flowing locks again. This chap had short black hair and a red face, the healthy glow of which included even

the nose. He was carefully dressed, and looked as if used to his "three squares and a snack" daily.

Yet even while indulging in these reflections Myer's heart gave that old familiar thump. The man looked different in every particular. He had not run away, but was publicly exposing himself in the brightest of lights. His gaze, as he bowed to the perfunctory applause of the drinkers, was now dreamy, now keen and practical, never desperate—as that other gaze had been. But—he hugged the violin as that man had hugged it. The peculiar attitude was registered on Myers' memory.

"It's him," he gulped, and rushed out for a policeman.

He came upon one lolling carelessly at a street corner, to whom the pawnbroker, in high-pitched tones, imparted news of the fraud and its discovery.

"Wait," said the officer, "I'll 'phone to the station for a plain clothes man. It wouldn't do for me to make the arrest in uniform. It might hurt the management."

Ten minutes later the plain clothes man put in his appearance and in deference to the wishes of the café people the officer waited until the place closed before arresting his man. Goldman, much elated by the result of his sleuthing, went home to a much needed rest.

Next morning he was honored by a visit from headquarters.

"You had it right, Goldman," advised the inspector, "the man whose arrest you caused is the guilty party. He confessed after we found the makeup, wig and so on, in his room. He had played the game on more than you and Klein—half the pawnbrokers in town were left lamenting. His partner, who framed the job, got away to New York, beating the chap we have in custody out of his share of the proceeds. In fact, the man who pawned the violins and did the dirty work was really a dupe. The fellow who got away, an old-time gentleman crook, uses his brains to pick out uncompromising jobs, attended with little risk. He got acquainted with the violinist at the cabaret, where the plan was arranged.

"The queerest part of the story," added the inspector, "begins with the stealing of all the violins in Providence. One of the lot was taken from a wealthy residence and is a real Stradivarius, for which there is a reward of five hundred dollars. It has a special V-shaped mark burned in the wood at the bridge. Now some of you pawnbrokers—"

Goldman, without waiting for further information, rushed behind the counter and grabbed the fiddle. His eyes traveled hungrily to the bridge and there they stopped, as he emitted a shout of joy.

"This is it," he cried; "this is the real Stradivarius!"

"You're lucky, after all," said the inspector, "but remember," he continued, "you'll be wanted in court tomorrow morning as a witness."

"I'll go," said Goldman, "but inspector, please, I ask you, don't ask me to testify. I shouldn't want to say anything against that fiddler. He done me a favor. Think of it, inspector, three hundred and fifty profit. I had a suspicion all along it was an old master!"

HAZARD & O'CHANCE: LIGHT COMEDY

BY FRANCIS W. DEVER

Highway robbery is a legitimate profession as practiced by these two comedians, who pool their capital in one grand plunge on the good horse, Pat McGlynn. But Pat proves to be one of those flivvers that pass in the night.

VICIOUSLY the September sun cast its enervating rays on the macadem of the Black Horse Pike. Wearily the drooping figures of Terrence O'Chance and me shuffled over it, (the pike, of course), burdened each with the weight of a traveling bag and a heart heavy with woe; and with pockets that sang not the sweet melody of jingling coins.

This wallop of Fate we would, ordinarily, have accepted with the calm philosophy of practice. Involved in our late descent from affluence, however, were many things which rendered it, even to our callous hides, a blow most cruel indeed.

Before carrying you over the route from effect to cause, a word or two anent the *dramatis personae* would seem not out of place:

Terrence O'Chance is five feet, eight, ovate, and ample of back. Red hair and imperturbability are a rare combination. Terrence possesses it. Also, he has a captivating, redeeming, blue-eyed humor. And when you hear the voice of him, you sense the purl of water through the green-scoured hills of Erin; and you know that Terrence O'Chance has hung by the heels from Blarney Castle, and pressed his lips against a certain facet of cold, unresponsive stone, not once only, but often, and passionately.

My own specifications I will omit. In their stead, permit me to offer that if the autobiography of alias Dave Hazard were written, it would contain sequent and closely related chapters entitled: *Broadway on the High Gear; The Expensive Heart of Mazie Terpsichore; A Row with Dad;* and *Pruned from the Family Tree.*

Two weeks prior to the staging of this comedy, Terry and I desired to operate in the town of Oyster Grass, New Jersey. One of our preliminaries was to call on Reuben Venal, chief of police. Character analysis accomplished, we discussed our enterprise with him. As a result, it was mutually agreed and understood that each and every night at the hour of eight, and stealthily, Terry or I would deposit in the yawning palm of the officer on our beat, the meager sum of two dollars. Said Reuben Venal, in return, was to render himself and his department, as far as possible, concerning a certain stuss game, bereft of sight, speech and hearing. Further: Hazard and O'Chance were to be advised of any raid, foray, visit, or other device tending to jeopardize their peace, liberty, or comfort, at least thirty minutes in advance.

Ten days that little game of ours prospered. Then, unheralded, one night at the hour of nine, the officer into whose yearning palm Terry or I had deposited each and every night at the hour of eight, and stealthily, the meager sum of two dollars, closed our doors and projected us into the august presence of His Honor, the mayor.

We were held for court then in session. Ere another two suns had sunk beneath the hills that fringed the western rim, the Grand Jury had us indicted. We pleaded guilty. The judge was an adept at knowing what the traffic would bear. He fined us two hundred and fifty each, accepting my stop watch, worth three hundred, for the twenty dollars we were short; and suspended sentence. In reference to our future, he advised most kindly; and gave us three hours to relieve the country of the "odium" of our presence. The cynosure of eyes choleric, eyes contemptuous, and eyes commiserating, we slunk from the court house. With an hour to spare, we hurried over the country line.

Again you see Terrence O'Chance and Dave Hazard, misanthropes, wilted, leg-weary, and barren of funds, plodding disconsolately over the somber surface of the Black Horse Pike.

"'Tis a foine pass we've come to when two dacent respectable gamblers can't ply their trade without bein' persecuted be a bunch of rubes that couldn't tell a full house from low casino," mourned Terry.

"We rave about Rooshia and the Jews but, in me own opinion: 'Charity begins at home.' It's got so a man can't participate in a game of penny ante in the gintle warmth of his own foireside without some self-appointed eradicator of vice reportin' the incident to the police. The country's gone to the divil."

"Professional jealously, Terry," I explained. "The pirates of finance have it on us. With wealth on their side, they're out to eliminate competition. What chance have honest men like us against them?"

"Niver a monad," said Terry. "But there's wan little oasis in this desert of persecution. Down on the boardwalk, the other day, a chap was tellin' me about it. It lies south of the Mason & Dixon line.

"Makin' powder for the allies is the chafe industry.

"Pick and shovel men recave four dollars a day; and the poor unfortunates are rakin' their brains for conganial ways of partin' with it. Law and order would be as welcome as roaches in Mrs. Rohrer's kitchen. There's only wan first-class game of chance in the town, too, and it don't begin to handle the patronage. Be golly, Dave, if we had a hundred dollars, we'd go down there, and soon be lopin' along on the road to filthy opulence."

"One hundred dollars!" I laughed bitterly. "If we had fifty cents right now, we wouldn't be dining on raw turnips and tomatoes, believe me. If we don't reach Philadelphia shortly, we'll be stricken with acute indigestion from worry and lack of proper food." Just then, as a touring car rushed past, some one in it threw a folded newspaper. It took Terry on the side of the head, and ricocheted sharply

to the road. Terry rubbed his head ruefully. Angrily my eyes followed the car.

"Forget it," smiled Terry. "I have no kick to register. It moight have been a brick."

He stepped to the newspaper and picked it up. At once he turned to the sporting page. We read the Belgrave entries together.

"Look at Pat McGlynn in the third," yelled Terry. "Nointy eight pounds, and apprintace allowance. The handicapper must have been intoxicated. If Pat McGlynn couldn't bate that field with William Howard Taft up, Oi'm no judge of skates. The pickers have overlooked him, too. Oi'll bit ye could get as good as tin to wan. And us without a cint! Dave, if we can raise twinty dollars be tomorrow at iliven, and tiligraph it to McTurf, we'll be anyway two hundred dollars to the good. Thin we'd go down and show thim poor pick and shovel min how to be happy though married to four dollars a day."

I laughed quietly as Terry raved on.

About two o'clock that afternoon, we came upon a little four by six box by the roadside. Terry peered in the window.

"It must be a pay station," he announced. "There's a tiliphone in it."

This was my second trip over the Black Horse Pike. My first had been made by automobile. The chauffeur, a garrulous fellow, had informed me regarding this very box.

"It's a pay station, all right," I answered cynically. "Not the kind you mean, though. It's one of those diabolic contrivances known as speed traps.

"Another legal shakedown. There's no danger of us getting caught in it today, is there?" I laughed. "At any rate, it's only operative on Sundays when business is particularly good. You see, if it were worked every day, motorists would learn to run through it slowly, and another 'jestice o' the peace' and another 'conshtable' would be working for their living."

"Only on Sunday you say it's worked," mused Terry. "I wonder now—" Again he peered through the window. "There's a copy of the Revoised shtatutes lyin' on the 'phone stand. I wonder now—say, Dave, aren't ye almost a lawyer?"

"Another year at school would have turned the trick," I answered.

"Foine;" his eyes scintillated with the joy of a new-born inspiration. "The trap's sit. Ye may be the jestice of the pace, Oi'll be the conshtable. To avoid confusion, and minimize complications, we'll shtop no cars bearin' New Jersey licenses. It moight also be well to sit up yer office in the cut back of this hill. Whin Oi make an arrest, Oi'll have the prisoners droive in. The hearin's had better be proivate."

"You don't mean for us to—"

He interrupted while I was grasping the import of the scheme: "Ye get me, Oi think."

"Terry, you've got brains," I said with much *eclat;* no one who knew you long could well gainsay that. This proposition of yours looks good; it teems with the spice of adventure. There's only one serious objection to it; you're taking something and giving nothing in return. Was it Jeff Peters or Andy Carnegie who laid so much

stress on this violation of business ethics? Whoever it was expressed my sentiments."

"How much does the Shtate of New Jersey owe us roight now?" he inquired.

"Considering mental anguish, ruin of business, lawyer's fees and fine, I should say about three thousand dollars. Neverthe—"

He again interrupted. "Yer estimate's low. But it disposes of the shtate. As to the motorist: There is written in the shtatutes of this shtate a law which provides a pinalty to be assissed on thim that droive their automobiles or motorcycles beyant a given shpade.

"Ivery toime a motorist violates this shtatute and gets away with it, he defrauds and insults this inglorious commonwealth. In shpoite of yer opinion of shpade traps, Oi think they're a grand and not unnaccassary corractive inshtitution. Not less than half a dozen toimes this very day we have been missed be the diameter of an oylash as some woild divil shot by. Can't ye see that we're doin' the shtate a sarvice be the settin' of this trap? At the same toime the money we collect in the name of the shtate, and turn over to ourselves rajuces the shtate's debt to us, and don't cost the shtate anything. Wan thing Oi'll grant: the shtate won't appreciate the work we're about to do. But rapublics and commonwealths are provarbially ungrateful."

I wrung his hand. Terry's logic was compelling. From the depths of my travelling bag, I disinterred a field glass. I handed it to Terry.

"Remember," I reminded, "a New Jersey license is as good as a passport. And we'd better not stop anything running less than forty miles an hour.

"From past observation, we'll keep busy enough at that."

"Very well, Yer Honor." Terry saluted comically.

The first car to feel the spring of the trap bore a New York license.

"Ye are under arrist for shpadin'," Terry informed the chauffeur.

A man on the rear seat bent forward smiling. He consulted a billfold of unusual promise.

"My friend," he stated, "we are in a great hurry. We plead guilty. How much do we owe you?"

Terry and I held council. I came forward.

"You are fined five dollars and costs," I announced. Seven dollars and fifty cents, total."

He proffered a crisp ten dollar bill. "Good day, gentlemen," he bade us genially, and made no reference to his change.

"Pretty soft, Terry, pretty soft, eh, what?" I chortled.

"That wan was, yis," Terry admitted. "They won't all be in a hurry, though."

The next two cars bore Pennsylvania licenses. After some argument, and reference to the Revised Statutes, we collected from each seven dollars and fifty cents. We might have gotten more, but the motorists seemed pretty good fellows.

Then came the fourth car; in it a tartar. New York should have been ashamed of him.

"Outrageous," he blustered when Terry informed him of the charge.

"Outrageous, I repeat. Let me warn you that I will pay no fine, sir. First I will rot in one of your filthy jails."

"Ye were runnin' at the rate of fifty miles an hour, contrary to one of the shtatutes of this shtate, the number of which I disremember," Terry answered without show of spirit.

"You are mistaken, sir. I was not running a mile over thirty-five," asserted he who would rot in jail.

"Well, thirty's the limit," said Terry. "Bring yer machine off the highway. Ye'll be blockin' traffic."

Court convened. Preliminaries over.

"Mr. Plethore," said I, "you have heard the charge of 'Constable Burk.' What have you to say?"

Mr. Plethore had a great deal to say. He directed a tirade of invectives against the State of New Jersey —the integrity of its judiciary; the honesty of its people, (called them leeches, vampires, and sand-burrs), and their culture; and deeply into the tender flesh of its traditions, he jabbed the harpoon of coarse irony. Vocabulary of abuse exhausted, he paused.

"You seem to forget that you are in the presence of the court," I reminded.

"Court!" he howled. "A court of grafters, I should call it."

"Foine him for contimpt," whispered Terry.

"Enough said, my friend," I warned the defendant, assuming a mien of legal severity. "You are fined ten dollars for contempt of court, and ten dollars and costs for speeding. And if the fine does not have the effect of civilizing your tongue, we will try harsher measures."

"I desire to enter an appeal," he stated with the wheeze of an exhausting gas-bag.

"You may do so," I bluffed. "Bear in mind, however, that your remarks relative to the courts of this state will not look well on the records. You have your rights, nevertheless, so we will enter an appeal." Mr. Plethore engrossed himself in deep thought.

"Your Honor," said he, for the first time, and in melliferous tones, "an apology is due you. Permit me to offer it humbly and sincerely. This matter has annoyed and inconvenienced me more than you can imagine; and it is clear that I have allowed my temper to overrule my better judgment. Permit me to rid myself of the unpleasant incident. Will you kindly vacate the appeal? I have but fifteen dollars in cash on my person; will you accept my cheque for the balance?"

"Your apology alters the aspect of the case," I said. "Appeal not entered. Your fine for speeding is reduced to seven fifty and costs, and the law will consider its dignity upheld by a five instead of a ten dollar fine. Fifteen dollars removes your obligation to the court. Thank you. May we meet again under less embarrassing circumstances. Bon Voyage!"

Mr. Plethore and his little Ford rambled on. As he moved off, I noted on his brow a cumulus of anger. So did Terry.

"Dave," said Terry, "it's about toime for us to be hittin' the grit. If Oi'm any judge of human nature, Mr. Plethore is goin' to bawl us out to ivery traveller he meets. Complications are inivitable, as me friend the poet ixprisses it. A half hour hince,

and ivery pitchfork wielder in this locality will be trailin' us. The day has been profitable; why risk further humiliation at the hands of this accursed commonwealth."

Walking rapidly, we soon came to a flag station of the Philadelphia & Fog River Railroad. Opportunely, too.

Shortly we were bowling merrily toward the big city across the Delaware. Once over the river, we breathed relief.

"Terry," I conceded, "the thirty-nine dollars we collected this afternoon is the product of your gray matter. Minus carfare expended, the disposition of it lies with you. I believe you mentioned a horse called Pat McGlynn, running at Belgrave tomorrow in a field of dogs. How much goes down on Pat McGlynn?"

"Since ye put it that way," answered Terry, "we'll woire twinty foive to McTurf."

First, though, we took the "L." Time to telegraph was not so precious. On the other hand, it were better not to linger long near the Jersey ferry. At Fortieth and Market Streets we left the "L." Immediately we hunted up a telegraph office. As telegraph companies are somewhat chary of handling business relating to horse racing, unpleasant questions are sometimes asked in this connection. Communicating with McTurf by means of a code, we wired with the twenty-five, this message which, in view of what precedes, is no doubt clear:

> See Pat after two tomorrow. Make best bargain.
>
> HAZARD & O'CHANCE.

It occurred to me, after the telegram was on its way, that it would have been safer to have used "McGlynn" instead of "Pat" to designate the entry. Terry laughed when I voiced the thought.

"McTurf makes no mistakes," he assured me. "You should know that by this time. Pat McGlynn is the only Pat intered for tomorrow, anyhow."

"Third race: Fedora wins!" I read to Terry next evening from a sporting extra. "Among others, I observe that one Patrick McGlynn also ran," I remarked cynically.

Terry gazed at me. I gazed at Terry. Silently, sorrowfully, we fell into the arms of each other; silently, sorrowfully, we wept upon the shoulders of each other.

What did the gods think we were, anyway?

To a café we wandered, and sought solace in drinks of many colors, and maundered of evil stars, and the tenacity of misfortune until the shrill, defiant crow of a cork in a poultry store nearby apprised us of approaching dawn. In the nepenthic grip of saturation, we wended a tortuous journey to our little third-floor-back.

There in the gentle arms of Slumber, (or Morpheus, if you insist), we knew no more until well into the morning, when some one knocked loudly upon our door. It was the landlady. An expressman desired that we sign for a money package, she stated. Terry and I rushed to the street door. Sure enough, there *was* a money package—value three hundred and fifteen dollars! Terry opened it. This is the gist of the note it contained:

> Twelve to one was the best I could get on Fedora. Harris and I cracked a couple

of pints on you which accounts for the missing ten. Don't be so cryptical in indicating your skate hereafter. You had me guessing for a few minutes. Regards.
McTURF.

"If McTurf calls this a joke," said Terry, "Oi'm a willin' victim."

"Sentiment echoed," I returned.

For fully an hour Terry and I mooted this strange matter. Like a will-o'-the-wisp, solution seemed as far away at the conclusion as when we began. One thing we knew: the money belonged to us, however its acquisition was brought about. McTurf's note had not been written to veil an act of benevolence. He was no paragon of charity we knew.

"How about the tiligraph company?" suggested the resourceful Terry.

We called at the office from which we had telegraphed McTurf.

"Will you please have ours of yesterday to McTurf, New York, repeated?" I asked the clerk.

A little later the clerk submitted for our inspection the following:

See *hat* after two. Make best bargain.

A DATE WITH FATE, *by Gertrude Sanborn* is another December feature. It is a cheery little story of a woman who went into the park in search of romance because she was tired of crocheting picots across guest towels and was bored by a husband who was a perfect forty-eight (around the waist) and had a perennial pain in his shoulder.

NUMBER ONE ON THE SUCKER LIST

BY G. B. GRANT

Two men match wits to see which is on the side of the intellectuals and which is on the sucker list—and all because of a few letters written by a young lady who had not reached the age of discretion.

THE sign on the door read, THE KIMBARTON DETECTIVE AGENCY. Underneath in smaller letters were the words, *Divorce Cases A Specialty*. The building was dingy and the corridors showed strong evidences of neglect.

The man in the hall plainly did not belong. From the "tissue weight fall soft" to the neatly shod feet, he was immaculate. The gray suit with the gardenia in the buttonhole, seemed to recoil in disgust from the dry, musty odor that pervaded the place; the irreproachable linen of his attire looked whiter for its surroundings. His nostrils twitching disdainfully and the clean-cut patrician face with its thin, cruel lips, showed the distaste he felt for the work before him. He reluctantly opened the door and went in.

The office bore out the promise implied by the rest of the building. It was lighted by two dingy windows, through which the sun was trying in vain to shine. A typewriter desk, minus the typewriter, occupied the room. Three or four chairs, time-worn and dilapidated, stood along the wall, and a calendar bearing a date of two years previous hung between the windows. A door at the back of the room bore the inscription, *Mr. Kimbarton, Private*, and from behind this issued raucous snores with steady monotony.

The visitor rapped smartly on the desk with his cane, waited a moment, rapped again, and then a third time.

The snores ceased, the door opened, and from within came a short, pudgy figure dressed in a soiled and wrinkled suit of blue serge. He stood in the doorway for a moment, sleepily rubbing his eyes, his pasty face moist with perspiration.

"Whadya want?" he growled surlily.

"Mr. Kimbarton, I take it?" remarked the visitor.

"You take it right then, an' I don't need no books, an' no insurance, an' you gotta fat lotta nerve a-comin' into a busy man's office an' poundin' on his furniture with a stick. Whadya want anyway?"

"I thought," said the stranger, picking his stick up from the desk where he had laid it, "that this was a detective agency. I see that I was mistaken. It's a school for bad manners; and, as I don't feel that I need any lessons in that line, I will bid you good-day."

He started for the door, but the other forestalled him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said meekly, "but I was up all night on a case and my temper is a bit short today. Anything I can do for you in the line of business I assure you I'll be very glad to handle."

He brought two chairs from near the wall and placed them by the table.

"Sit down, sir," Kimbarton urged; "anything you may give us to handle will receive the most excellent of attention." His eyes searched the visitor's face anxiously now.

The man in gray stood by the door, twirling his stick, mulling the situation over and trying to reach some decision. Then, with a smile of contempt at his own weakness, he walked to the table and seated himself.

"Kimbarton," he said slowly, "I'm going to lay my case before you and I want to tell it in my own way without interruptions, mind, without any interruptions. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," said the detective, "I gotcha."

"Right! First then, my name is Van Der Cynck and I am the private secretary of Mrs. Willis Stairing, wife of the Nevada smelter magnate. Remember, no interruptions," as the detective moistened his lips with his tongue. "Jerry Longley recommended you to me. He said you were a 'damned crook' and would do anything in the world for money." He paused, but the detective remained silent and he went on again. "That's why I gave you another chance. Crooks are common. I know twenty in my own set that are fully as crooked as you, but Longley says that you have brains and can use them. That's what I'm looking for,—crooked brains.

"Three years ago I met Ethel Clagdon at a house-party at Saranac. It was the first time I had seen her for about ten years, and she had changed from a long-legged, freckle-faced kid into a magnificent looking woman. I did not know her at first, but she recognized me at once and greeted me most cordially with outstretched hands."

Van Der Cynck raised his hand warningly to Kimbarton, who had straightened up in his chair and was gaping at him, stupid with amazement.

"'Ethel Clagdon,' she replied to my salutation. 'Wyndham was my uncle's name, Billy; I had no right to it. Oh, that glorious summer! I shall never forget it. And you—you haven't changed a bit. Come over and sit down, Billy.' She led me to a chair away from the rest of the crowd and we began to talk over old times.

"'It was always money, money, money,' she said. 'Wherever I went, even when a child, people forgot to look at me. The Clagdon millions blinded them. They didn't care whether I was an ugly duckling or a bird of paradise; whether I was an angel or an imp; it was all one to them. I reflected money, and to stand in the glow of that reflection was all they craved. Billy, I was so sick of it. Never an honest opinion; never a kindly impulse. They were drunk with the thought of so much gold, and I was fawned on and petted until —well, I couldn't stand it, and so summers I would go to visit Uncle Jim and I told every one my name was Wyndham. The summer I met you was the first of six, and the

happiest of all, Billy. When I was finally discovered even there and I saw people who had known me for years change over night and get the gold-greedy look in their eyes and the fawning, sycophantic tone in their voices, I gave up the struggle and that was the end of masquerading.'

"We saw a great deal of each other after that; and a year later she promised to marry me, but insisted that the engagement be kept a secret for the time being. Then came the failure of the Mastodon Bank, and the Clagdon fortune was wiped out. Henry Clagdon committed suicide rather than face a term in a Federal prison; and when everything was settled, Ethel was not only fatherless, but penniless. I urged her to marry me then, but she kept putting me off. Then yesterday," and Van Der Cynck's face was wicked with anger, "she told me she was going to marry John Dally, a miserable artist who can't sell enough of his own pictures to keep him out of the poorhouse,—and she penniless." He slapped his stick on the desk in wordless rage and stared straight ahead, forgetting, apparently, the man to whom he was talking.

An apologetic cough from Kimbarton recalled him to his surroundings and he took up his story again.

"That brings me to my purpose in seeking you," he said. "Once she told me that,"—he gulped with rage. "She said, 'It was the third summer Billy, I was nineteen, and my head was full of romance. His name was Kenally, Howard Kenally, and I thought I was in love with him. He said he was in love with me, and I believed him. We eloped, but Uncle found out and brought me back. Then I wrote to him. Foolish, silly letters they were, the kind a silly, sentimental child would write, saying how dearly I loved him and always would, and a lot of silliness; nothing that was wrong, but horribly and utterly foolish. Then my uncle told me that he had looked him up and found he was a married man, and that killed it. I never saw nor heard of him again and hope that I never shall, but I wanted to tell you about this, Billy, so you would know.'"

Van Der Cynck studied the tip of his shoe for a moment and then went on, his face fiendish in its intensity, his voice vibrating with suppressed anger.

"Here is my plan. Find this man Kenally, get the letters, and send them to Dally. Dally is a prude, a man who would think a woman unclean if she should tell a lie even by imputation. He's a Puritan of the most rigid views. Those letters would damn her in his eyes as surely as if she were Saphira herself. I'd bleed them of every cent they have; but she's broke, and he's as poor as a church mouse. I don't care a whoop about the money anyway, but by God, she won't marry him if I have anything to say about it. Get those letters, Kimbarton, and I'll give you a hundred dollars apiece for them, and pay your expenses. Look up this man Kenally. All I know of him is that he was at Idlemere ten years ago and he was a short, stout blonde, with blue eyes. He was married and lived in Chicago on Dearborn, near Schiller Street. Can you handle it?"

"I can handle it all right," said Kimbarton slowly, "provided the price is O. K. One hundred apiece isn't enough for them letters."

"How much, then?" asked the young man angrily. "Look here; don't think you can play me for a mark. I'm not a rich man and while I am willing to do the right thing, I won't be held up. What's your price?"

"Listen to me, now," said Kimbarton, his face showing the confidence he felt in his ability to handle the situation. "In the first place, you come into my office as if you owned it, tell me where to head in at, and call me a crook without any license. If I'm a crook that's my own business. I haven't got you skinned any, I reckon. You talk about blackmail like you was pretty well used to it, and you're trying to hand this girl a package because she throws you down and hooks up with another guy. Well, the letters will cost you one hundred dollars apiece, all right. That's five hundred. Callin' me a crook is five hundred more, and five hundred more for necessary expenses is a grand total of fifteen hundred. Take it or leave it."

"Right," said Van Der Cynck, shaking with passion and getting to his feet. "I'll leave it, you dirty little shyster."

"One moment, please," grinned Kimbarton malignantly; "that word 'shyster' will cost you another hundred. Yes, I know," as the young man started to speak, "there are plenty of other agencies that would be glad to handle this, but you see I happen to be Kenally," and he burst out laughing at the look of blank amazement on the face of his visitor.

Van Der Cynck came back and sat down. "What's your price?" he asked helplessly, "and how the devil do you happen to be Kenally and Kimbarton, too?"

"Oh!" remarked the detective airily, "I just traveled under that name for a while, liking the sound of it, so to speak. As to the price, I told you, sixteen hundred."

"Ridiculous!" cried Van Der Cynck. He rose to his feet again. "I will give you a thousand dollars for the letters, and that's the ultimate limit. If you insist, I'll apologize for calling you a crook and a shyster, but I won't give more than a thousand for the letters, and that's final."

He had his hand on the door knob when the detective spoke. "You win," he said; "a thousand goes. Wait!" He went into the room marked private, and for several minutes the visitor waited. Kimbarton presently returned with a packet of letters in his hand and laid them on the table. "C. O. D." he remarked and looked expectantly at Van Der Cynck.

"I want to examine them first," was the answer; "that's a little thin. First you say you are Kenally, when I know you are Kimbarton, then you want to sell me those letters you have there for a thousand dollars when I don't know whether they're the ones I want or not." He held out his hand. "Give them to me. If they are what you say they are, you'll get your money immediately. Come!"

He looked expectantly at the detective, still holding out his hand; and, after a moment's hesitation, Kimbarton placed the letters in it.

Rapidly Van Der Cynck ran

through them, his lips relaxing into a faint smile as he gathered the import of them. Folding the last one, he placed the packet in his pocket. Then, drawing a fat wallet from his inside pocket, he counted out ten hundred-dollar bills on the desk. Picking up his cane, he started for the door when the voice of the detective halted him again. There was a taunt in the voice now and a sneer on the coarse lips of the man as he spoke.

"Say," he drawled, "you're a pretty wise Willie. Not! You were going to hand me a package wan't you? Going to get them letters cheap and get away with it while I played the sucker and watched you do it? Well, you're just about a thousand out on this deal, Old Top."

"What do you mean?" demanded Van Der Cynck coldly. "Are not these the letters I wanted? Are there any more besides these?"

"Oh! They're the ones you wanted all right, and that's all of 'em; but you, you're a fine come-on you are. Why, you poor nut, I'd a-pulled that game myself if you hadn't butted in, and anyone had tipped me off where I could find that Wyndham doll. I didn't know her name was Clagdon. Kicked me out of the back end of a rig, her uncle did, and I've been laying for a chance to get square. And you! You blow in and run the whole game for me and hand me a thousand bucks. You're a hot sketch! I gotta hand it to you, kid."

Van Der Cynck had flushed angrily while Kimbarton was talking, but waited quietly until he had finished. Then, in the same even, well-modulated tone that had characterized his earlier speech, he said, "Jerry Longley said you were a damned crook, and I believed him. He said you were a fat-head, and I believed him. Figuring you to be these two things, I called you the first to make you mad, and added that you had brains to make you foolish. I succeeded admirably in each case. Me, you characterize as a sucker, a come-on, and several other very worthy things that are, no doubt, a part of your profession. You say I'm a thousand dollars out. Maybe. Mrs. Stairing, however, is probably many thousand in, besides, and an untold amount of happiness and a fortune in nights when she will be able to sleep. On the whole, I think I'm entirely satisfied, and I am sure Mrs. Stairing is."

"What the hell has Mrs. Stairing got to do with this anyway?" snarled Kimbarton. "I don't know anything about Mrs. Stairing. It's this Wyndham kid we are talking about, ain't it?"

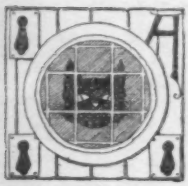
"One and the same," assented Van Der Cynck, over his shoulder, as he opened the door and stepped into the hall, "and my name, by the way, is Clagdon, not Van Der Cynck. You see, Ethel Clagdon married Stairing this morning; and as I happen to be her brother, she asked me to clear up this annoying little business detail while they were on their honeymoon, and before you found out who she was. Come-on—eh? Why, my dear Mr. Kimbarton Kenally, I've known who you were for six months. You're number one on the sucker list. No one but a come-on would fall for that sentimental bunk I sprung on you."

The door closed with a bang.

DEMATERIALIZATION

BY C. MASON

It is a simple matter to dematerialize a body by cremation. In this case, a man locks a good, healthy girl in a bank vault for two hours and tries to send her soul into the infinite with the aid of soft music instead of fire.



FAIR young thing, with tender blue eyes, entered Woodworth's office and calmly seated herself. A glance at her portfolio impelled him to seek refuge in the cool brick vault of his neighbor across the passage, Barker, who called himself a banker; but the lady barred the way.

"No," he said desperately, without waiting to be interrogated, "I don't want to subscribe for a History of the War, nor Lives of the Candidates, nor Picturesque Anything."

"But, honored sir," replied the mild, simple and rather simpering young person, "I do not ask you to subscribe for anything, unless, indeed, you would honor me by taking a ticket—"

"Ticket nothing!" again interrupted Woodworth. "I've no leisure for amusements. My time is all taken up with my profession—and science."

"Ah, that is what drew me hither!" beamed the beautiful girl. "I perceived by your sign that you were a lawyer, and I have heard that you are a member—a prominent one—of the Psychical Research Society. In one, or both capacities, I think you can do me an inestimable service."

Woodworth, touched at two vulnerable points, unbent.

"You see, kind sir," she continued, "I am a materialized spirit. My manager, Mr. Shockton, who is stopping at the hotel—here is his card—called me forth from the spirit world by mistake for Martha Washington, with whom I was contemporaneous."

Woodworth had noticed the antique style and courtly bearing of his visitor.

"He delayed so long in endeavoring to correct his error," she went on, "that, instead of remaining in the misty, indistinct form in which spirits are preferably presented, I became as thoroughly substantial as when I was before on earth, one hundred and forty-six years ago."

"Upon my word, young lady—or, venerable dame—" the lawyer corrected with halting courtesy, "this is a very extraordinary statement. Do you not know that you render yourself liable to prosecution for obtaining money under false pretences when you attempt to sell tickets on such a tale as that?"

She smiled trustingly. "No, sir, I did not know that. Indeed, I am only beginning to learn the strange things of your wonderful century—but I like them very much. Though my familiarity with the distaff and spindle, the needle and quill pen will no longer afford me a livelihood, I have an ardent longing to learn the sewing ma-

chine or the typewriter—and become a New Woman. I am most anxious to resume the life prematurely cut short in 1770, in my eighteenth year, when I died from what was erroneously diagnosed as a quinsy. I have reason to believe that, had I been properly treated for diphtheria with an antitoxin serum, I should have lived to a good old age."

"What is there to prevent you from doing so now?" asked Woodworth, touched and interested immeasurably by his singular client.

"Because my master—for so I must call him—Mr. Shockton, who brought me from the other world, is determined to send me back. I hear that, from mercenary motives, he means to dematerialize me at his very next séance."

Woodworth hurriedly thought of all known legal processes, but neither *habeas corpus, ne exeat,* nor any other writ with which he was familiar seemed a remedy against the peculiar form of extradition proposed by Shockton.

Putting on his hat, he exclaimed: "You sit right there while I interview this tyrant, Miss ——?"

"Amy Alright was my name before," she answered sweetly.

Finding the spiritual manager in his improvised office at the hotel, the lawyer addressed him by name, saying: "I warn you to desist from your persecution of my client, Miss Amy Alright. She is perfectly satisfied with 'this mundane sphere,' as the reporters call it, and intends to remain here. I shall take steps to enjoin you from making her the subject of further experiment."

"Take a ticket," was Shockton's cordial response, thrusting out a card. "One dollar, please; 7:30 this evening. We are going to dematerialize the chit this very night, and if it doesn't come off, call me all the liars you like. Next!"

"One moment, Mr. Shockton," and Woodworth severely. "I understand you to say that you intend to dematerialize, which I suppose means to disembody—to cause to disappear—"

"Into thin air—evaporate—*vamose!*" answered the medium, in a business-like tone.

"Cause to disappear a person now living? That, my dear sir, is murder!"

"Wrong!" replied Shockton. "Who is this girl? Where does she hail from? She has been dead one hundred and forty-six years. Can't kill a person twice, you know. What good is she, anyhow? She's way behind the times—can't even sell a ticket to her own dematerialization."

"Then you are determined to dematerialize the lady again?" demanded Woodworth, somewhat demoralized.

"Sure; come and see for yourself. Take a ticket, and one for your wife."

"I shall certainly come—with the police. You insist on making this preposterous experiment?"

"Fact. But tell you what I'll do. You may take the young woman—lock her up—do anything you like with her, and I'll bet you a cool hundred I'll dematerialize her all the same."

Woodworth clutched at this proposition—he began to see a way out. The Psychical Research Society was hastily summoned in special session, and Amy Alright was introduced to President Barker and the members.

Her frankness and timidity convinced the most sceptical among them that she, at least, was innocent of collusion with the medium. She appeared terribly to dread the threats of Shockton.

"Oh, gentlemen," she pleaded, "put me under ground; put me in some strong place, where it will be impossible to get at me. I am so tired of being a spirit. Don't let me be dematerialized again!"

Provided with a lunch from the hotel, wrapped in napkins, she was smuggled into Barker's Bank—it was dignified by that name in the village—and locked into its roomy old brick vault, and a committee signed an affidavit to that effect.

Then all the Psychical people attended Shockton's séance. It was very long and very mysterious. For two hours the audience—they could not be called spectators—sat in darkness, listening to soft music and waiting for Amy Alright to appear.

At last there came a gentle tapping. "Ah, ha!" exclaimed Shockton, "she comes! Who goes there?"

"The spirit of Mistress Amy Alright, who died of the quinsy in 1770."

"Are you in the flesh, or in the spirit?"

"A spirit, alas! Oh, woe is me!"

"There you are, gentlemen!" said Shockton, switching on the light. "Now produce your Amy, if you can."

The audience, led by the Psychical Research committee, trooped back to Barker's Bank. Heavens! The man had won his bet—Amy had dematerialized after all.

So had the contents of the bank!

The only material evidences remaining of the guileless girl and her work were the crumbs of her luncheon, the napkins in which it had been wrapped, and a hotel table knife—snapped short off—which had served as a screwdriver. The big, old-style locks, with their screws, lay on the floor.

In the December issue: PUTTING ONE OVER ON ADAM, *by Leland S. Chester,* a business story in which rival firms in the meat packing industry strive to gain control of the local market.

THE GENIUSES OF THE SUN

BY OSCAR LEWIS

After years in the turmoil of metropolitan journalism, a man goes back to the country paper of his youth in search of a job, a restful atmosphere, and—a girl.

HE swinging door of the city editor's office creaked half open and Henshaw's tow-haired copy kid stuck his head out into the city room.

"Stratton!" he called, and the occupant of the seat by the window dropped the paper he had been pretending to read and shuffled to his feet. His gaze roved about the all but deserted city room; its few occupants were busy and none looked up, which fact caused Stratton to smile faintly. They were good fellows, he reflected—none better—and he was thankful to them for pretending to be unconscious of his humiliation, though their deception fooled no one.

They knew what was coming; knew it as well as Stratton himself. Since that day, a week before, when the stockholders, dissatisfied with their last semi-annual dividend checks, had shifted directors and demanded a cut in expenses—since that day, the one question in the minds of the city room had been, "Who?" And now that question had been answered.

When Henshaw, giving out the assignments ten minutes before, had sent White out on the Hyde Street murder case, those who were of the old guard exchanged knowing glances, for the day's big story—especially if it were of the "violence" type—generally went to Stratton. And, as one by one the reporters got into their overcoats and stamped out on their assignments and still Stratton remained reading his paper at the desk by the window, even the greenest of the cubs realized who was to be let out.

Stratton passed into the city editor's office, the swinging door closed behind him, and two minutes later, he stepped out again into the city room.

Henshaw had been very kind, in fact, had come closer to an expression of human emotion than Stratton, after seven years of nightly association, had deemed him capable. But Stratton was the highest paid member of the staff and Henshaw must reduce the payroll, though he could not manage with fewer men. A second-rate man could be hired on half Stratton's salary, and the other half added to the dividend checks of the stockholders. Henshaw had fully explained the situation, and they had risen to their feet and gripped hands.

Stratton straightened up his desk, sweeping the mutilated sheets of yellow copy paper that littered its top to the floor; gathered up a few personal trifles and left.

The elevator boy told him on the way down that the home team had scored two runs in the first, and the man behind the cigar stand in the corridor greeted him perfunctorily as he passed. Then Stratton stepped out into the unnoticing crowds of the street. So much for his seven years on the *Sentinel*.

At his rooms, he sat down and gazed out of the window and smoked. After an hour, he got up and wrote a letter which he took down to the end of the corridor and dropped down the chute. And for the next six days Stratton spent his time sleeping and smoking by the window or wandering about the city park. Much of this new-found leisure was spent in day dreams that a week before he would have found entirely incomprehensible. At the end of six days came an answer to his letter. He tore it open eagerly.

"My dear Fred," it began. Stratton repeated the phrase, the lines of his face crinkling very slowly to a smile. He read on:

> Give you back your old job on the *Sun*? Dear boy, would Corsica have welcomed her conquerer home; or Stratford hers? Come, tho' I fear you will find us rather dull—a little eight page semi-weekly—after your achievements. Seven years! And now you are coming back. We shall be very proud to welcome you.
>
> H. GALVAS.

Stratton started the next day. The little shop he found unchanged. The editor greeted him at the door, his gray eyes shining and held him at arm's length and chuckled over him as over a son. Stratton wandered slowly about the shop, reconstructing memories; the row of cases along the wall to the left, where he had struggled to mastery over the compositor's art; the cement topped make-up table where, in the early days, he had pied the form of the department store's "Annual Mid-Summer Sale" advertisement and then fled home, convinced that his connection with journalism was henceforth and forever ended. He took a drink at the tin icewater container in the corner and noticed that a thick glass tumbler had taken the place of the cocoanut shell that used to serve. Stratton regretted this. Before going home that evening with the editor, he set two sticks of legal news for the Tuesday issue, bungling it badly for he found his fingers clumsy.

Stratton fell into the old routine quickly. He renewed old acquaintances about town; he set up want ads whistling as he worked; he run the job press, and went about town rustling "locals" which he wrote up in his own pungent style—tiny three-line character sketches, so genial and good-natured, so humanly humorous as to make even the persons they depicted chuckle delightedly at their own foibles.

Fred Stratton settled back into his old niche, which he found very satisfying and restful, and it was some time before he would admit to himself that he was not quite happy. Yet this was true. One by one, during the days since he had returned, he had gathered up the broken threads of his old life; but there was one that eluded him. The thought worried him and he puzzled over it constantly, and, when finally the solution came to him, he laughed outright. That

night, as he sat on the steps of the editor's cottage, he found himself asking about Helen Dimmick.

"In the old days, when the three of us were here together," he said, "Helen Dimmick, you remember, kept the books and wrote the society column Saturdays, and looked after the want ads and subscriptions. How we three did work! And when a show or a circus came to town Helen and I would go and enjoy it the more because we belonged to the Press and had complimentary tickets!"

The girl, Stratton learned had left the *Sun* a year after he himself, and, like him, had gone East. The old man led him inside and showed him a copy of a small juvenile paper with Helen Dimmick's name as associate editor.

"How proud I have been of you two," said the old editor, placing a hand upon Stratton's shoulder,—"the geniuses who started on the *Sun!*"

This news of his old colleague sent Stratton's thoughts roving often into the past. But the joy of recreating the old atmosphere and of experiencing anew the zest and restless eagerness of earlier days was too keen for him to be other than contented.

And then one day, nearly a month after his return, Fred Stratton felt once more the thrill of the big news story and, in an instant, became the metropolitan reporter, Stratton of the *Sentinel*.

He had wandered early one afternoon to the depot, where he proposed covering the up express in the interests of the "Local Comings and Goings" column, and had been standing at the ticket window talking idly with the agent when the telegraph instrument began chattering sharply its "urgent—urgent—urgent" signal. The agent opened his key and shot back a reply as he drew a yellow pad toward him.

Stratton, sensing anxiety in the other's actions, leaned over his shoulder and watched the twisting pencil.

—No. 9.—wrecked, southern approach, Trinity bridge—broken rail, down embankment—engine, baggage, four coaches—under water, rush aid, doctors—notify Gen. Supt.—Tomelson, Trinity bridge operator—No. 9.—wrecked, so—

The instrument kept up its sharp, nervous clatter, repeating the message while the agent straightened up slowly and sprang toward the door.

Stratton grasped his arm as he emerged. "I'll fetch doctors," he said, "and nurses and supplies—"

"Yes—yes," replied the other, not stopping. "And hurry." He disappeared in the direction of the roundhouse.

Stratton crossed the street to the office of the telegraph and telephone company. He gave the news to central with orders to locate every doctor within call. While waiting, he stepped across to the telegraph counter and scrawled a message. It was a twenty-word "flash" of the wreck addressed to the *Sentinel* and signed "Stratton." The operator sent it at once. Then, like a good reporter, he learned the location of the telegraph office nearest the wreck. The girl at the switchboard called him and for the next five minutes Stratton repeated his news to doctors and nurses, and to stores where he ordered blankets and such other things as occurred to him as likely to be of use. And always he

added the incisive order to hurry—hurry!

The relief train—switch engine, a flat car and two day coaches—started fifteen minutes after the message had been received and Stratton rode with the others in the forward coach. It was a quiet, repressed group that had gathered there; the four doctors, examining and rearranging the contents of their kits, one even removing his coat and cuffs in ominous preparation; the amateur nurses nervously sorting stacks of towels and rolls of cotton upon the red plush seats; the group of helpers, recruited from the loungers about the depot, standing silently in the aisle or on the swaying front platform and gazing down the straight track ahead.

A high, motionless column of white smoke and steam first warned the watchers that their race was approaching its end. The engine loosed a prolonged blast, rumbled across Trinity bridge and slowed down as they neared the curve that brought the wreck into view.

Two cars remained on the track, a third slanted down the steep embankment and the remaining four lay in an irregular "W" in the muddy lagoon at the riverside. At its head was the engine, drivers in the air, a peaceful film of smoke rising from its riven vitals.

A group of those who had escaped, occupants of the rear coaches for the most part, were standing in groups on the tracks and gazing down upon the half-submerged coaches below. Several who were not seriously injured were seated along the fence opposite, where they were subjected to the gaze of the curious. A dozen men walked back and forth along the sprawled coaches below, carrying sticks with which they carefully smashed the cracked glass from the sashes of the windows. Save for the steaming engine of the relief train, this clash of glass was the only definable sound that the rescuers could hear.

The arrival of the relief train speedily brought a return of decision to the survivors; reality, which for half an hour had been in eclipse, pushed again to the fore and the work of rescue began to move quickly. Ropes were obtained; jammed doors were forced or men lowered through broken windows. Another relief train came hurrying into sight from down the valley, and directly behind, the business-like wrecker from division headquarters. Authoritative shouts filled the air; the axes of the wrecking crew crashed through paneling and portions of broken seats were shoved through windows and tossed aside. Stretchers appeared; the line by the fence grew longer.

Stratton busied himself here. He obtained the names and addresses of the injured and the extent of their injuries; he listened to the conflicting stories of the survivors and culled the truth from the distorted; he aided in searching the pockets for means of identifying the dead. The work was not new to him; it was the "violence story" atmosphere that he had so lately escaped. He moved about quickly, his voice quick, nervously tense, his face an absorbed mask.

He reached the end of the line and sat down upon an overturned plush

seat and rewrote his list of names very plainly, labeling it, "Partial list of dead and injured." He then wrote a brief account of the wreck, skeletonizing it to save time in transmission; merely listing the essentials for the rewrite man in the office, and confining it to a single sheet of copy paper. The relief train upon which he had come was about to return, carrying the first of the dead and injured. Stratton gave his story into the keeping of one of the trainmen, who promised to get it on the wire for him.

He went back to the line by the fence. Several new figures had been added to the end and he obtained the names of these. The last one in the row was a little girl. She was conscious, so he leaned down and asked her name. The child stared back at him in a wide-eyed, dazed fashion; and Stratton, obtaining no answer, wrote on his list, "Unidentified girl, about seven, slightly injured—shock." As he wrote, he became conscious that someone had kneeled down opposite. Very tenderly this newcomer raised the frightened girl in her arms and drew a caressing hand over her forehead. "Now tell me your name," she said, a note of maternal gentleness in her tone, and the child answered immediately.

"Why," said the girl, softly, "her mother is down at the other end of the line. How glad they both will be!" And the tense, strained lines of her face relaxed in a quick smile at Stratton.

He had looked up at the first sound of her voice, and now, for an instant, their eyes held each other's. A moment passed before either spoke, and then, unconscious of their surroundings, their hands went out in an instinctive, friendly grasp. Tongues were loosed and words came tumbling from their lips.

"Helen Dimmick—"

"The great Stratton!" exclaimed she, and then the girl between them stirred; this brought both back to the present, repentant at their moment of self-interest. Helen Dimmick, a quick look of sympathy in her face, gathered the child up and carried it to its mother.

"I'll look for you on the train," promised Stratton, returning to his work.

During the greater part of the journey back to town the girl was busy at her volunteer nursing and Stratton gathered up the loose ends of his story. Then he sought her out and they sat together in a deserted rear seat. In a few brief words he explained to her the story of his return to the *Sun*. Helen Dimmick listened eagerly.

"Why—why I, myself," she began haltingly, and then paused. "It's so surprising; I can hardly explain—"

"There's no need," said Stratton, slowly. "I can do it as well; explain how you one day found leisure to look along the road ahead, and how you fell to wondering if such things as quiet and restfulness really existed anywhere, or if they were only soft-sounding names. And, how, after a time, the days on the *Sun* rose before your eyes, and you had your answer, and—"

"And the next morning I bought my ticket, laughing at my own folly,

neglecting to even write—"

"The place is open, and waiting," said Stratton. "And—and the famous Animal Show comes on the Seventeenth; the advance man was in yesterday and left the tickets!"

Arriving in town Stratton wired the remaining details of his story, and together they wandered around to the little shop where the old editor welcomed the girl back gladly, and Stratton had her sit at the desk by the window and tap the red curve of her lower lip with the tip of her pencil as she gazed across upon the courthouse square, for this, he declared, had been her habit. For a long time the three talked of the old times that had come again. "And some day," said the old editor, "I shall cease to edit the *Sun*, and I like to think that you two will be here in my place, and that the work will go on."

Next morning there came to Stratton a long telegram from the *Sentinel*. The accident of his having been near the scene of the wreck had enabled that paper to score a very clean beat over its rivals, and the message, in consequence, was enthusiastic and one of congratulation. "We haven't succeeded in finding anyone who handles the violence stories as well as you," the message concluded. "Your old position is open if you care to return."

Stratton's pulse quickened at this admission of ability. He sat very still, puzzling silently. The lagging midday breeze floated in at the open windows and rustled the slip in his hand. In the rear of the shop the old editor leaned over a table, spectacles well down on his nose, his lips moving as he corrected a strip of proof.

Presently, Stratton tossed the telegram to the girl. "Your old position," she stated, "they've offered it back. That's fine," striving to put enthusiasm into her voice. "I'm glad, for your sake. Let me be the first to congratulate you." And she held out her hand with a vague smile.

Stratton rose to his feet and picked up the telegram, tearing it slowly into a dozen strips. Both smiled faintly as they watched the pieces flutter down into the waste basket.

"Yes," said Stratton, taking the proffered hand, "you shall be the first to congratulate me."

Hapsburg Liebe tells one of his stories of the Tennessee mountains next month; a story of the land where the laurel and the feud flourish. BUCK HENRY, DESERTER is the name of it; and it has something in it besides a feud.

LOST---A STAR

BY KENNETH VAUX REED

A fall from a second story window is generally more or less painful. Certainly there is rarely any romance in it. But then, the girl in this story wasn't looking for romance, she was trying to avoid it.

IVY'S trousered legs swung gayly even while she frowned severely at a fold of her wide white smock which she creased and re-creased. Ivy's feet were like that—eternally optimistic, dance feet. And, sitting there on the sill of Perreard's second-story window, she was merry in spite of the seriousness of the business in hand.

"Nothing to it, Harvey," She shook her head without turning to look at the moist, chubby tenor who pleaded at her shoulder. "I can't see you that way."

"Aw, be a good fellow, sweetie," the little fat man begged peevishly, coaxingly. "Just try and look once. You and I hitched up could go out over the big time together and show vaudeville what's what. You've been there and got a rep, I know. That's why Perry just the same as stars you here in his bum cabaret. It'd be kinda like hitching my wagon to a star I suppose, but I'm willing. Sing me the pretty tune this time. C'mon." His hot breath was on her neck, his cheek against hers, one arm behind her, the other circling in front to meet it. He was fat and warm and excited. The physical contact made Ivy frown and her foot stop swinging for an instant, but she had long since learned to endure this thing from men she could not ignore altogether. Sat sat still in his embrace.

Behind them, in Perry's, was the buzz of the cabaret diners and over that the boisterous delivery of a vaudeville monologuist. The faint glow of light that strained through the coarse canvas of the scenery on Perry's miniature stage to lighten the gloom all about them, came from the great hot room where Perry's patrons, rejoicing in the belief that they were happy as Parisians only are happy, consumed carelessly prepared food and carefully adulterated wine and all the while applauded the excellence of the entertainment provided. For Perry's is one of the oldest of the cabarets in this country and the best as a place of amusement. There the spirit of the cabaret is preserved.

So long was Ivy silent that the fat man finally concluded she was not going to answer him.

"Silence tokens assent," he murmured and tried to kiss her. Her hand went up to his face and turned it away easily, carelessly. And again she was silent, suffering his embrace, her face turned away from the light outward to the listless breeze from the darkness of the street below. Even

this darkness was broken by bright light in two paths from the windows of Perreard's Restaurant—the downstairs one where stupid people, uninterested in French songs and music with their meals, took advantage of the economic opportunity offered in Perreard's sixty-cent dinner. Just the lobe of her ear and a straying strand of her bright hair peeping from under the floppy velvet tam-o'-shanter, the curving line of her jaw and a very small patch of her cheek were caught in a high light by the glow behind her. Instead of the professional smile on her lips was a wistful one her public had never seen. But the one foot hanging free under the sill swung almost as briskly as ever.

"I'm different from most girls in the profession, Harvey," she spoke at last.

"Sure you are," agreed the tenor tightening his embrace. "That's why I want you."

Ivy loosened his arms a little and went on as if he hadn't spoken. "I left a happy home over on the edge of Jersey to go on the stage. My folks weren't crazy about my going, but I didn't have to run away. Guess I was like all the stage-struck Janes though. Nothing would do but I must 'develop my talent' and be a Broadway planet.

"But, Harvey, I landed a job the first day in the big wicked city, went into a musical stock organization that summer and into vaudeville the next season with a good act. In the spring I went out on the U. B. circuit with my own tabloid company. It was too easy. And right now I'm as much of a star as I'll ever be—willingly. There isn't anything I hate just at this minute like the smell of the theatre, and the glare, and the lights on the bald heads, and the feel of the grease on my lips. Here Perry's got me down for a new song tonight—by Berlin—sure-fire hit. And here I am dolled up like a little Artie art student in velvet pants and a silk smock like no artist ever wore and tam-o'-shanter—all ready to go on and sing, "The Picture of My Dreams," before the admiring throng. Am I satisfied? No. What do I want? I don't know. But one thing sure: The stage has gone stale on me. I wish now I'd stayed home. As the cartoons say, 'Father was right'. It's my own fault, I guess. I thought I had a lifework and now the bottom's fallen out of it. I'm going to drop out of the show business, Harvey. So if you want to marry a partner for vaudeville,—forget me, that's all."

The fat tenor looked around into her face. "I get you, sweetie. What you want is a home and kids and fireside stuff. I'm dippy about you. I'll go that far. Just say the word and there's a flat up in—"

"Maybe you're right," was Ivy's listless interruption. "Home and kids and fireside sound good. But there's got to be more. Something you ain't got. Something that isn't in you. So just run along, Harvey—and forget it."

Instead, the perspiring man drew her against his chest tightly and pushed his face over her shoulder against her own. "I'm damned if I do, Ivy. You're a little queen and I want you. The only one I ever felt like this about! I'm going to wake

you up yet." He sought her lips.

"Cut it," cried Ivy, roused to anger at last. "I've said 'no' and that's all there is to it. It's your cue for a quick exit. Good night!" She drew her hands up between them and laid them on his shirt front, holding him away. "Let go! Let go, I say, Harvey. Don't be a fool. I can—" She pushed suddenly so that the starched shirt front wrinkled and crackled loudly. But the tenor was heavy. The push worked just contrary to her expectation. She slipped outward on the window sill, wildly reaching for a hold on something, anything. Her fingers caught his collar, pulled, broke it. And Ivy slipped suddenly downward.

The awning over the restaurant entrance broke her fall. She flapped down to the pavement on hands and knees enveloped in a swirl of canvas, but not even scratched.

The first thing she did was to laugh —a merry peal, muffled under the canvas. Almost immediately she was conscious of hands tearing excitedly at the chaos that covered her, and, in an instant, she was able to scramble up, the last fold falling away from her. There she stood, in the flare of light from one of Perreard's lower windows, a jaunty figure in tam-o'-shanter, smock and velveteen trousers, smiling happily and beating the dust from her clothes. Facing her, the full light on his lean face, was a tall, earnest-eyed young fellow, evidently the man who had extricated her from the wreckage. He was talking and holding her arm, demanding to know if she were hurt. Behind them, in the restaurant, people were rising to their feet, waiters were hurrying toward them. Ivy saw them and looked down at her costume. A vivid imagination showed her, in a flash, how they would crowd around, asking silly questions, and storing up information to spread all over the city. Off stage, she was seized with stage-fright.

"Quick!" whispered Ivy, and her happy-go-lucky feet turned of their own accord. "I've got to hide. Please, —just for a minute." As the door of the restaurant opened, Ivy slipped with her rescuer into the darkness, moving swiftly, running along the dark street until the young man drew her aside into a darkened store entrance.

"Far enough!" he breathed, and they both paused, a little breathless.

In the half light, Ivy could see her rescuer leaning against the plate glass window, tall and blonde, slender and boyish. He was very serious she could see vaguely.

"Why did we run?" he asked abruptly.

"We ran to—because—because they were coming,—the waiters,—the people. I didn't want to be seen—in these clothes." Though she had thought nothing of appearing before the cabaret crowd at Perreard's in the costume, Ivy blushed a little under his frank scrutiny.

"A hod carrier appears before all eyes in his overalls. Why should you not be seen in your working clothes?" The young man eyed her sententiously.

Ivy looked sharply at him, then down at the smock and trousers. "Working clothes?" Then, "Of course." Again she regarded him earnestly, puzzled. "But I've never

worn these on the street before."

"You're not ashamed of them, though?" he interrogated. A moment he was silent, then sighed deeply. "It's the dream of my life—to be an artist. Please say you're not ashamed of your profession."

Only a second did Ivy puzzle over that before she answered, "No, not in the least." This was true whether he spoke of painters or actors. There was a suspicion in her mind, though, that he had made the mistake. Anyway, she never had been ashamed of her profession.

"I'm glad of that," he nodded. "For in God's world there are no nobler men than the artists."

Again she wondered whether he was speaking of artists in a large sense or particularly in reference to creators of pictures. And too, this time she was struck by the exclusive masculinity of his sentiment. She asked herself whether he could be making another mistake, a great big ludicrous mistake.

"There are women who paint, too," she said airily, in the tone of an impersonal observation. Then added in slight confusion, "I mean women artists, of course."

"Oh, certainly," he agreed, impatiently, she thought. "But I can't believe there is much sex rivalry in art. We give the women honor due. I mean we men do. Don't you think so?"

Ivy nodded sagely, exercising all her self-control. "Oh, we do. Indeed we do." She wanted to laugh immoderately. His mistake was so absurdly absurd. And yet she could not put him straight. She knew well that she could not face his serious regard and explain as kindly as he deserved to have it explained that she was an actress, a dancer instead of an inspired painter of pictures; that the trousers were a costume, not a habit.

Biting her lips to keep from smiling, she turned from him and stole on tiptoe to the corner of the show window to peep cautiously around. In front of the restaurant was Perreard himself, his hands flitting all ways at arm's length, his feet stamping the hard pavement. Several waiters jabbered with him excitedly, and bystanders joined in the fun.

"Oh, I *must* go back," she told the young man, turning to him. "I'm needed. I've got to go—in only a minute." But after two minutes she still lingered. He joined her at the window corner and together they watched the crowd.

"Look here," he began suddenly. "You don't want to appear before that crowd do you? And unless you do, you can't get back to your studio until the excitement is over. Meanwhile—if you could stay—I—I'd like to talk to you,—if you'd let me,—please." There was eagerness and earnestness in his face, a sort of boyish enthusiasm that made Ivy want to stay. She wavered for an instant. She was thinking of Perreard. But again she turned the way her feet wanted to go, giving a mental snap of her fingers in his direction.

They drew back into the entrance.

"You see, I've never talked to a real artist before," the boy explained. "And I'm madly interested in painting. To nurse a canvas from absolute bleakness to something real, almost

breathing, the counterpart of life itself, seems to me— But of course," he broke off shyly, "I am only an amateur. I haven't yet learned to know when I'm inspired and when I'm not. I've always felt that if I could just know an artist, talk to one, I could feel so much more confidence in myself and my work."

So serious was he that Ivy felt a little sorry for the deception. But she could not bring herself to confess. "Anything I can do for you," she whispered, "I'll do gladly. 'Help one another' is almost an axiom among us. Besides,—you rescued me."

"Will you? Oh, will you?" the young man cried eagerly. "I knew you would. I prayed you would. You'll have the time. Wait while I get a taxi. Please don't think better of what you've promised. It means so much to me. Wait here." And he would have been off and away had not Ivy caught at his sleeve and clung in almost feminine fear.

"Wait a minute! Don't go! Please! Tell me first what you want."

"I'm afraid you won't do it. It's not much to ask. Please don't think of refusing."

"Yes, but what?"

The young man was quiet for a moment while the earnestness and pleading gathered in his eyes. "Only to look at my pictures. Tell me whether they're good or—or bad; whether I've got a chance. It means so much to me to know. Won't you come?"

Then, while Ivy was grasping the import of his request, the low-gear noises of a taxicab grated in the street, and from the direction of Perreard's came the vehicle gathering speed. The young man at her side darted forth, and in an instant too brief for reflection or consideration, too brief in fact for anything but a soft laugh over the mischief her feet were doing, she was in the machine.

There was no talk during the brief, swift ride. Ivy combed her memory for art phrases, professional-sounding words of vague meaning. Then she found herself waiting on the sidewalk in front of a dark, dingy building looming upward four stories or so. Her friend rejoined her.

"We could have walked," she suggested, nodding at the departing taxi. "Those things are expensive."

He smiled sadly. "Oh, I can afford it," he mourned. "If I were a real artist it might have occurred to me to walk. But I'm tied to a job and a salary, and my father gives me studio and room rent free here. That's why I have to paint afternoons and Sundays and do my drawing by artificial light. You draw in the evening sometimes, don't you?"

"Saturday night," replied Ivy gravely, and with little fear that he would catch her meaning. "I've got a reputation for drawing, too. That's the reason they pay me what I ask."

They had entered the gloomy building with its unlighted halls and climbed three flights of steps. Along a passage, they groped until the boy paused, and she heard the clink of keys. She wavered for a moment, then, with a smile, stood waiting.

"I've been after Father to put electric lights in this old barn," he explained as he bent to the keyhole. "There's only gas; but I think we

can see all right. And please tell me the truth. I can stand it. I'd really rather not be flattered. This way." He threw open the door and walked in familiarly.

But before Ivy had taken a step she heard a sound,—a heavy rasping sound as of some one using a meat saw on a taut rope. She stood stock-still.

"What's that?" she whispered timorously. In spite of the role she was playing, her voice trembled. Her misgivings took shape and she reprimanded herself for being placed in such a position. "What's that?" she repeated.

"Come on," came her guide's voice from within the room. "It's only my room-mate. He sleeps like a log—in a sawmill. The lights won't wake him. Come on. And be careful of that chair—to the right of the door."

But Ivy was running away. On tiptoe she slipped down the corridor in the dark and, hearing him stumble over a chair and call out again softly, she stole down the stairway in mouse-like silence. It was plain desertion. Yet the absurdity of it made her want to laugh aloud.

She ran a block after she had left the building, then stopped to look around. But before she could discover where she was, to her surprise, almost consternation, she caught sight of a tall shadow a block away,—a fleeting figure in headlong pursuit. She caught her breath. Pursuit! She hadn't dreamed he'd follow. For a moment she stood almost breathless, while he hammered on toward her.

Afterward she could recollect that a precious instant had been wasted while the thought flashed into her mind that she was glad in a wild, unaccountable way that the boy was following her. Then she had fled.

The rest of that mad chase she remembered as a breathless nightmare, a mere chaos of impressions. There was one vivid recollection of a narrow escape when, dodging about in a parked square, only his stumbling over a "Keep Off" sign had saved her. She had sped away, smock knotted about her waist, hair uncoiffed but safe in the bagging fold of the tam-o'-shanter, free-limbed and swift, only a boy running in the shadows.

A street, darker than the rest, presented itself, its narrow opening partly concealed by a projecting porch. Dimly she realized that it led to a less admirable part of the city, but she could not halt. Into it she turned, running on tiptoe so that he might not hear her when he came to the corner behind. A short block and then a turn; another short block and a blank wall.

In consternation, Ivy paused. Back against the wall, her breast rising and falling in tumult, she listened. Only the city's sounding silence fell on her ears for long minutes that seemed like hours. She relaxed. The sigh she gave was genuine, not of relief, but akin to disappointment. Because now that she had escaped she felt sorry for the boy whom she had treated so badly—not intentionally, but badly, nevertheless. Then she remembered that he had been intent only on regaining his fleeing art critic; he had not known that this was a girl he pursued; he had given chase for none but selfish reasons. Indeed, she had fled to

prevent his discovering that it was a girl who had run away from his roommate's snores. She was glad she had succeeded in eluding him. Only now that she was free she would like—she half wished that he could guess.

Then came footsteps pounding at the entrance of the blind alley.

Ivy thrilled, looked this way and that, laughing in the renewed joy of the chase. Overtake those flying feet, impertinent boy? Never. For beside the house at her left Ivy had discovered a narrow flight of stone steps mounting to some unknown level in the darkness.

Up she sprang, two steps at a time. But tired muscles refused to climb a thousand steps in five hundred bounds; and these steps were steep. So she was obliged to slacken her speed and plod step by step, up and up, until there seemed no end, and she was beginning to puff and pant. And in climbing those endless stairs she had to raise both hands several times to the faithful tam in order to prevent its slipping off and spilling her hair about her shoulders.

Just as she saw the deep blue of the night sky above the top step, there came to her the sound of ascending steps, two at a time on the first few stairs, then one at a time, and slowing perceptibly. Ivy had come above the tops of the houses crowded close under the hill in the older part of the city, and when she saw the top step and beyond that the street along the edge of the hill and heard the hurrying footsteps behind her, she bounded up the remaining steps. Sharply to the left she turned, along the road overlooking the city, and came to an abrupt and jarring stop in the embrace of a giant, who resolved into a policeman at a glance. The insecure tam-o'-shanter slipped and dropped to the nape of her neck, revealing its burden of wavy curling locks to the copper's astonished eyes for a brief moment before she swept one arm swiftly upward to replace it and conceal her disordered hair.

"Holy St. Swithings! It's a girl!" whistled Officer Corrigan, and grasped Ivy's two arms just below the shoulders holding her off for inspection. "And a queen at that. What's up, my pretty lady? And where did you get the rig?"

"Let me go! Let me go,—p-please!" panted Ivy, weaving from side to side in a struggle to escape the arm of the law. "Come, officer. I've got to go on. You'll be sorry if—" Then changing her tone—"Please, sir," and smiled at him.

"Sure," chuckled Officer Corrigan, and still holding her in his great paws, he looked up and down the street. "Just one, little queen, and I'll forget I met you." He released one of Ivy's arms so that he could press back his straggling mustache with two caressing sweeps of his great fingers. Ivy realized his intentions and fought madly, but succeeded only in keeping one arm free while he bent over her with a smug, grimacing face.

"Just put up your bail, little bird, and you're out o' jail," he smirked. "Put up your pretty face and you can say good-bye."

"You ugly mutt," sobbed Ivy, in rage and desperation, her free hand striving futilely to break the grip on

her arm. "You're on the force to protect women. You—I'll see you smashed for this."

Officer Corrigan laughed nastily. And, as if bent on choking that ugly sound, out of the darkness of the stairway came a leaping figure. One machine-like blow and Ivy was free. She shrank back into the shadows, watching the blonde boy in action, fascinated. Unconsciously, keeping her eyes on the fray before her, she assured herself that the tam-o'-shanter was securely in position, hiding all her hair. And instinctively she drew farther back into the shadows, seeking a hiding place. She knew that whichever man was victorious she must not be found. But she crouched behind a fence to watch the struggle because she could not bring herself to run away.

The man from whom she had fled was proving himself a match for the burly policeman. After that one blow, delivered with all the force in him, he was in the grip of the bigger man.

"Blow your whistle," he panted as he locked his left arm in Officer Corrigan's right to prevent his reaching for the club behind him. "Make a row. Go on! I dare you!"

The officer struggled on in silence. Back they went against the railing that bordered the terraced street. Below them were the roofs of squalid houses and beyond that the great expanse of the city. The rail was stout iron yet it quivered under the weight thrown against it. Officer Corrigan was heavy. And for that reason—for his weight was fat, and malt liquor fat at that—Officer Corrigan began to puff and weaken. Swiftly the blonde boy's right arm went under the stout policeman's left armpit up to the shoulder. His chest pressed tight against the officer's; the moving arm came up behind Officer Corrigan's neck, then to the left side of it, and the hand slipped in front of his throat close under his chin. Officer Corrigan found his head going back, his chin up, his back bending backward. He attempted to relieve the strain and straighten up by stepping backward and away from the tense-faced, stern-jawed figure. His foot struck the other's foot placed behind him, and down he fell like a slaughtered bull, on his back.

The boyish man stood over him.

"Get up, scum! Get up and get out. Complain and howl for help if you dare. Come on! Up!" And he stirred the prostrate bully with his foot. Up clambered the fallen guardian of the law's majesty, pale of face and gasping.

"I—I'm—going—to die," Ivy heard him whimper, breathing jerkily.

"I hope so," said the stern figure over him. "But I'm afraid not. Haven't you ever had the wind knocked out of you before? Move on, officer. Move on!" Whining and cowed, Officer Corrigan moved.

The boy wiped the palm of his hand over his brow and laughed mirthlessly. He looked about him slowly, turned toward Ivy's hiding place and took a few doubtful steps. She knew he was looking for the man who could criticise his pictures.

"Girl!" he called. "Hello! Where are you, girl? Where are you?"

Crouched behind her fence, Ivy felt her heart leap as never in her happy

life had it leaped before. With the tide of crimson that swept over her, swept also a tide of joy. He knew! He had known! The pursuit then had been the pursuit of life, the pursuit of man for woman! But within her was a strange constraint, perhaps a stupified happiness, or perhaps more; in any case, an influence she did not understand, but which restrained her.

"Girl!" he kept calling, up and down the shadow. For awhile she could not see him, but his voice came to her faintly. Again he passed near her hiding place. Soon his voice grew fainter and fainter—farther and farther away; then she heard it no more.

Panic-stricken she sprang to her feet. She took two steps in the direction in which he had vanished, paused, then went on hastily.

"Boy!" she called. "Where are you? I'm here. I was hiding. Boy, where are you?"

Presently she saw him leaning on the iron rail.

"Boy," she called, "were you calling me? Were you looking for me?"

When he heard her, his body straightened and the blonde head raised swiftly. He came toward her, both hands extended.

"Why did you hide? Why did you run away from me?" he asked, the serious light burning in his eyes made her aware that on his questions depended the continuation of the earth's revolution or the rising of tomorrow's sun.

"I—I didn't think you knew," she whispered, her profile toward him, her gaze directed at the far horizon which suddenly flared a hot red in an arc over the gas houses where a door had been opened on roaring fires.

"Knew what?" His earnestness amounted to a compelling force.

Either from an instinctive resistance to force or from that strange constraint that had laid its hand on her once before, she was silent, still looking away from him.

"You were afraid," he accused.

Slowly she nodded. "Yes, I—I was afraid to have you know."

"Know what? Please, don't torment me."

"That I am a woman."

"Lord, yes! I knew that!" He laughed queerly, his flashing eyes betraying repressed emotion. The gas house flamed again on the edge of the sky. In a moment she was crushed against his breast, breathless, but tumultuously happy. She heard him whisper something unintelligible, but somehow she knew what he was saying and put her face up to his without a thought as to the wonder of it.

"Little sweetheart," he murmured, "did you think I didn't *know* the minute I saw you? Did you think your working clothes could fool me?"

She smiled up into his face greatly comforted. "Then you didn't mean me when you said 'we men,' back there? You never thought I was a man?"

He pressed her closer. "Glory, no! You couldn't even fool a policeman."

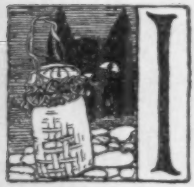
"But," and she forced herself to say it, "I'm not an artist. I don't know the difference between a palette and a—an easel."

Then he laughed aloud, his seriousness lost. "I knew that, too,—away back there when the taxi stopped under a street lamp and I saw your smock. It's entirely too clean."

THE BONE OF A CAMEL

BY ERICH BRANDEIS

A good yarn for Amy Lowell and the other verse librists to read. It might be the means of reviving the camel bone school of poets.



I HAD just taken a headache powder. Every time I go to one of Bill Curtis's parties I have to take a headache powder the next day. The powder had not taken any effect yet. I was stretched out on the sofa, my head buried in a pillow which was the only heritage from a rich aunt. She had left all the rest of her belongings to charity.

The pillow was perfectly plain, just as plain as my aunt had been; nothing on it but green trees and red flowers on a yellow background. But, the way I felt, I imagined that I was in the midst of an African jungle with gorillas and snakes surrounding me. Just as a roaring lion approached to do me harm my man entered and announced:

"A Mr. Jennings."

"Who?"

"Mr. Jennings. He says he is from Kalamazoo and came here especially to see you."

"Mr. Jennings," I pondered, "and from Kalamazoo. Never heard of him."

Nevertheless, I told the servant to show him in after he had assured me that this man Jennings did not look as if he wanted to borrow money or sell me life insurance or books.

A callow youth entered the door. The thing I noticed first was that he had many freckles on his nose. If anybody had told me that there was room for so many freckles on one single nose, I should not have believed it.

The clothes indicated small town. The shoes, turned up in front, had been half-soled; and I noticed that that clean young man took the expensive little Belutschisten near the door for a door mat, as he respectfully scraped his feet on it. Then he advanced two steps, bowed and introduced himself.

"Joseph Jennings, student of physiology from Kalamazoo. At present I am studying Oriental languages at St. Vitus."

"Pleased to meet you," I lied.

"You will be surprised—" He stopped. But as I did not, as he expected, lie about it, he continued. "You may be surprised that I am calling on you. I am from Kalamazoo, Michigan, you know."

As I couldn't see any cause for surprise in the fact that the young man was from Kalamazoo and as, in my present condition I would not even have been surprised had he been from Jamina or Wadi Halfa, he soon resumed, stroking his knee:

"I have a recommendation for you from your friend, Doctor McIntyre from St. Vitus."

I knew that kind of recommendation. McIntyre was a great friend of all aspirants in art and letters and whenever anybody wanted anything he gave him a recommendation to friends in New York.

Only three weeks before he had sent me a flute player with a recommendation. The man was thin as a stick, wore a celluloid collar and had a whole book full of testimonials from his home town friends. He was bound to go into vaudeville and did not leave me until I started him on the road to success with a dollar. Therefore my enthusiasm for friend McIntyre's recommendations was way below par.

Still, Jennings was a student, and I had been a student myself.

"May I ask what you are doing here in New York?"

"Oh, yes, that's why I am calling on you."

He hesitated a moment then he asked: "Of course you know the Modsahabat?"

"The Modsahabat?" I pondered. Was that a Spanish dancer, or did she play in musical comedy, or—

"I am sorry," I finally said, "but I can't just place the lady. Is she supposed to be in New York?"

"A lady!" Jennings looked at me as if I had suddenly gone daft. "But you must remember the Modsahabat, those narrative poems of pre-Mohammedan origin which the Arabians wrote in golden letters on Byssus and which now hang on the walls of the Kaba in Mecca."

I thought that in my present condition the Arabians would have done me a great favor if, instead of the Modsahabat, they had hung Jennings of Kalamazoo on the walls. But I simply answered:

"Oh, yes, in the Kaba."

"I am thinking of writing a book on the Modsahabat," Jennings then informed me.

I assured him that I had been waiting a long time for just such a valuable book to be published.

"I intend to prove, furthermore, that at the time the Modsahabat are supposed to have originated, the Arabians did not even know the art of writing on Byssus," continued Jennings.

A hypothesis which appeared much more important as I did not have the slightest idea what Byssus meant. I remembered Issus, where Alexander the Great had been victorious; I knew of Nessus who poisoned Hercules in such a mean manner; but Byssus was a stranger to me.

"And I intend to prove that before the days of Mohammed such prize poems of Arabian poets were generally written on camels' bones and that on all preserved camels' bones there is not the slightest trace of Modsahabat."

"And you see," he continued, scratching his freckles, "I am looking for one of those camel bones."

"In my house?"

"No, of course not. But I have been told that at the museum here they have one of those bones. My father gave me my travelling expenses and enough money to stay here as long as it will take me to decipher

the writing on the bone. Tomorrow I shall start on my search in the museum. I thought that perhaps—and your friend Doctor McIntyre said that you—"

That was just like McIntyre; flute or camel's bone—I never played one or read the other,—but, in both cases, McIntyre stamped me as an authority. I therefore assured Mr. Jennings of Kalamazoo that as long as I had lived in New York I had never heard of the camel bone.

He was very sorry and our conversation began to lag until I finally asked him:

"How do you like New York?"

"It seems rather a noisy town for quiet study," replied Jennings, "and the arrangement of the streets is somewhat strange. One seems to take the wrong cars continually."

I was afraid he might begin to talk about Modsahabat and Byssus again, and, as I did not care to display further ignorance, I began to draw an elaborate map for him, showing the nearest and safest way to the museum.

Finally I explained the route with all its street car, subway, elevated and bus connections, and as I happened to have a ticket for a musical comedy which I could not use on account of my headache, I offered it to him, apologizing for the fact that it would be rather a frivolous entertainment for a man of his mental calibre, but then —this was New York.

He was kind enough to accept the ticket, remarking at the same time that while it had nothing to do with his studies and that he was especially opposed to the shameless display of hosiery which one sees in such entertainments, out of mere curiosity he would look in for a few minutes.

Before he departed he promised to keep me informed about his progress with the Modsahabat.

Two days later, one of my cousins called on me. He is a fruitgrower on a large ranch near a small town and his principal accomplishments are high-balls and a book on "The Removal of Spiders from Young Peach Plants," which he considers one of the best books ever written.

But when cousin Edward comes to New York he generally forgets all about spiders and peach plants and thinks mostly of his other accomplishment. He is especially interested in the night life. And as he stoutly maintains that he can not get along without me on his night trips, his visits generally mean numerous high-balls and splitting headaches for me.

This time, as usual, I had to accompany him. He managed to find a statuesque blonde with a raucous voice, who chewed a toothpick and was inordinately fond of champagne at five dollars the bottle. While Edward was telling her about crops and spiders, she flirted with a college student at the next table.

I was bored and felt extremely *de trop* when suddenly I saw something that attracted my attention. There in one of the stalls, with his arms around a very thin lady, sat Jennings from Kalamazoo, freckles and all.

When he saw me he came over to our table, his steps rather insecure, and he expressed great pleasure at seeing me.

"You are no doubt surprised to see me here," he said, "but, you see, I met that young lady after the theatre the night you gave me the ticket and she has been a great help to me ever since."

"Have you found the camel bone?" I asked.

He told me that he had not and, to be perfectly frank, had not even been to the museum.

"In spite of your description, I got the wrong car and instead of going to the museum I landed in Fourteenth Street."

He was about to tell me what he had done in Fourteenth Street, when his female friend came over to the table.

"Say, Jennings," she queried, "are you trying to ditch me?"

He informed her, tenderly, that he had no such intentions.

It then developed that my cousin's blonde and Jennings's bony beauty were friends. They kissed and embraced and the two joined our party.

I took French leave and went home.

The next day Cousin Edward called me up on the 'phone and informed me that Jennings was an awfully good scout and although he had been very drunk he had told him all about the Modsahabat and the camel bone.

For two days I heard nothing from Cousin Edward and I forgot about him and Jennings.

The third day, without knocking, Cousin Edward came in, sat in my most comfortable chair, lighted one of my cigars, and began to whistle.

"Did you ever see a *real* Salome dance?" he suddenly asked me.

I told him that I had not and was informed that I had missed the chance of a lifetime.

He then gave me a description of a little trip he and Jennings from Kalamazoo had taken into the tenderloin the previous evening after a good dinner with much wine, and how they had dropped into a place which advertised real Arabian dancers.

"It was not a very inviting place," he said, "and the drinks were awful. I didn't feel like going, but Jennings thinks there isn't a better chance to study life than in these places.

"It was too early for the crowds and two of the Arabian girls were sitting around in the half empty place. They joined us and started a conversation. One of them did not look very genuine and was quite old, but the other was great! Young, classy, with big black eyes, very black hair and teeth like ivory.

"The girls soon became familiar, the older first. Finally, the younger of the two proposed to give a special performance for twenty dollars; and she danced the real Salome dance. It isn't necessary to describe it, but it was the real thing, all right. And with the drinks, and the dance, and the heat, Jennings became very lively.

"He took a great fancy to the younger girl and she told him that her name was Zuleika and that twice as a child she had been in Mecca with her father, a respected Bedouin sheik of oldest desert nobility, and that she had in her personal possession one of those rare camel bones on which the Modsahabat is written.

"She did not brag about it. Jennings, clever as he is, just wormed it out of her by numerous questions.

"He then tried to speak Arabian to her, but did not succeed, because he knew only the classic Arabian, while the pretty girl apparently spoke the modern dialect. But because Zuleika had been working in New York for a number of years—publicly showing the greatly modified Salome dance—she spoke English very well, in fact, with the typical Bowery slang.

"As it was Jennings's greatest wish to gain possession of the camel bone before a museum or a college could take it away from him, he immediately offered the girl fifty dollars for it. But Zuleika only smiled and gave him such a look that he felt very cheap for having made such a low offer."

At length Edward came to the purpose of his visit. Jennings's money had temporarily given out, and he also was a little embarrassed at present. He had written home and expected funds shortly, but he needed two hundred dollars right away to buy the camel bone. And as they, of course, wanted to celebrate the good luck, a few dollars more for a nice, quiet, wine supper with the Arabian girls was necessary.

It was hard for me to say what I thought of Edward and Jennings. But rather than be called stingy, I gave Edward my check; and he promised to return the money in a few days.

Several months passed. I never saw Jennings again, but from Cousin Edward I received this letter:

Dear Cousin and Friend:—

You are probably surprised that I haven't sent the money I owe you and I should have written a long time ago, but I have been awfully busy with some experiments on a new spider glue. It's going to be a world beater. So I hope you will excuse me.

Poor Jennings is in wrong at home. He came back without the bone, looking very seedy. His mother thought he had worked too hard, but his father knew better. He was in New York once when he was young.

Jennings is trying awfully hard to get along and is earning his living tutoring and writing for the newspapers up home. Worst of all, he has discovered that the bone which he bought from the beautiful Arabian girl—you remember the one with the Salome dance I told you about—seems to be of more recent date than he thought and the hieroglyphics on it are not Modsahabat at all, but something more modern. He thinks however, it is worth considerable money anyway, as he bought it at a bargain. To show his good faith, he gave it to me for the debt.

Of course, in this little town, I can't dispose of such a rare bone; but in New York you should be able to sell it easily and that's why I'm sending it to you. Keep the $225 we owe out of what you get for the bone and send me the balance so that I may forward it to poor Jennings.

It will be to our and your best interests that you sell it soon, because I think the bone smells a little.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD.

I agreed particularly with the last part of the letter and did not lose any time. I took the bone to the curator of the Museum of Natural History. He is an authority on Oriental matters and examined the hieroglyphics carefully, covering his nose. He said it wasn't Assyrian, nor Arabian, nor Babylonian, nor Chaldean. It was Bunk. As to the bone, he advised me to consult a butcher.

I threw Modsahabat in the garbage can yesterday. Then I wrote a letter which read as follows:

Dear Cousin Edward:—

The market for camel bones is punk just now, especially when the camel is an ox. Tell Jennings to brush up on Zoology before he goes after any more Modsahabats.

COUSIN JIM.

THE SCULPIN

BY LEROY KENNETH

If a man dies with his boots on, the "obit," men register a few extra sobs on their typewriters. But when a man, just out of the trenches, dies with his gloves on, he is likely to be misunderstood —with boots or without them.

THE day was heavy with the promise of wind; there was a smell of frost in the air, and the big white flakes slowly sifting down were already covering their trail across the ice. Tom O'Neil, the master watch, surveyed his gang of sealers. The regular crew was overseas to the war, and the bunch of lubbers he had taken to the ice would be helpless in a blow.

"Come on, you loafers," he shouted. "We can't skin 'em now."

He jammed his pike into a cake of drift ice to pole-vault a fissure. The cake turned when he was in the air and, as his body slapped the water, his head crashed on the ice and stunned him.

The Sculpin plunged to the rescue, Scotty whipped a drag-line into the water, and the gang pulled them onto the ice.

"I wa'n't afraid," the Sculpin chuckled, pulling his wet shirt over his head.

His drawn face, and fishy eyes that seemed always staring with fright, had won him the title, "Sculpin," the most worthless fish of the sea. He was unpopular at the sealing grounds because he wore gloves. Gloves are a woman's garment; mittens the badge of a man. The Sculpin wore gloves always, eating, hunting, or sleeping. Even now, as he humped his back to the gale and stripped to the hide to wring the freezing water from his clothes, he kept on his gloves.

"We're caught," shouted O'Neil, above the moan of the wind, as the storm drove down upon them.

The Sculpin looked at the cloud of flakes waltzing among the ice-hummocks. "Better'n gas," he yelled. "I ain't afraid."

"This is hell," chattered O'Neil, as he tried to pound the ice out of his reefer.

"Nothing like," called the Sculpin, struggling back into his crusting clothes,—"just man-sized weather."

O'Neil searched the horizon of blurring white. The maze of hummocks was confusing, and the drifts over the bodies of the dead seals were constantly changing shape. He had come due north when they "walked the ship down;" but the compass was useless on the floe, for the whole mass might have turned since morning and the ship they had left at the south, might now be north, east, or west, while the bergs he had depended on to guide them back were erased from sight in the thick sheets of snow that went racing past.

"Have to hold her down 'til morn-

ing," he admitted at last.

The Sculpin threw back his head, took a long breath of the cold air, and laughed. The danger they faced seemed to give him pleasure.

O'Neil's clothes were wet, and they made him shiver as the stiffening ice-envelope rubbed against his body. His head was pounding and the chill of his freezing garments was eating into his blood.

The men huddled together, a helpless mob, and the wind whipped stinging particles of ice and snow into their faces.

"Blowin' harder every minute," whined Scotty in despair.

"Let it come," sang the Sculpin, a smile of delight at the prospect wreathing his ice-cemented face. "Let it come. I ain't afraid."

O'Neil knew a desire to sleep was a symptom of freezing, yet his eyes would close in spite of him, and the icicles on his lashes seemed to lock his eyes if he even winked.

"Every man for himself," he said, and slumped to the ice.

"Steady, boys." The Sculpin's voice rose above the howl of the storm. "He's down. I'll take command."

The frightened men accepted his leadership, for not one of them knew what to do. He ordered them to build a wall of frozen seal-bodies, ice, and snow. When it was done, they crouched close together in the lee of it for protection from the wind. The blow on the head had left O'Neil as spiritless as a jelly-fish, so the Sculpin got him to his feet and kept him walking.

"It's no use. We're done for."

"Without a fight," bellowed the Sculpin, angrily.

Holding O'Neil at arm's length, he deliberately struck the master-watch in the face with his gloved fist.

"Gone clean off his head," said Scotty. "I say, you—"

"Get back," barked the Sculpin, pushing Scotty into the lee of the wall. "I'm in command."

"Crazy as a stingaree," whispered Scotty to himself; but he obeyed.

"Now, you slacker," the Sculpin bellowed at O'Neil. "You've got to fight."

O'Neil did not want to fight; he wanted to be left alone—to sleep. The sting of the Sculpin's blows roused him, and he attempted to ward them off. Then, in petulance, he fought back; but not much science can be shown with nearly a pound of ice and frozen woolen on each hand.

The Sculpin tripped over the body of a dead seal and fell. O'Neil, now thoroughly angry, leaped onto the fallen body and clawed for the throat; but the oil-skins were buttoned high and thick with ice, and his frozen mittens made a choking hold impossible.

"Say when," yelled the Sculpin, as they rolled over and over, a confused jumble of flying arms and legs.

The snow they kicked up in the struggle was pounced on by the wind and instantly streaked away into the dusk. The Sculpin slammed O'Neil into a drift and sat on his chest.

"Enough," panted O'Neil.

"Awake?" the Sculpin asked, and O'Neil nodded assurance. "Then listen." The Sculpin spoke slowly, and earnestly. "I've taken your place, here—on the ice. You take my place,

over there—with the old crew."

"Where?" perplexedly.

"Overseas—in the trenches. They need men. They need us both. You wouldn't go for yourself. You will go for me. That's what I'm saving you for."

"Afraid to go yourself?" O'Neil sneered.

"Will you go?" grimly.

"Get me back alive, and I'll enlist," he agreed. "You're a nervy coward."

"You'll take my place?" The Sculpin spoke sadly, as he waved his hand to the east. "And you'll not be afraid?"

"I'll not be afraid," promised O'Neil, as the Sculpin helped him to his feet.

The Sculpin turned to the gang. "Bruce, Scotty, get out here and fight. Never mind why—just fight. Get mad. Hit hard—and don't be afraid."

Their only hope of fighting sleep was in fighting one another, so the gang wrestled and fought, sang and yelled, and tried to keep from thinking of their peril.

In the darkness, O'Neil wandered from the shelter of the wall. They found him in the open, fast asleep. The gang carried him to shelter and peeled off his frozen clothes, while the Sculpin gathered the drag-ropes of the gang into a pile and touched a match to the grease-soaked hemp.

In the flare of heat from the burning stack, the men rubbed O'Neil with snow, and roused him, while the Sculpin thawed and dried the clothes in the heat from the burning lines.

When the ropes were smouldering in a last red glow, the Sculpin broke up all save one of the pikes and clubs and, husbanding the precious fuel, managed to keep the fire burning through the lagging hours of the night.

As the embers faded, leaving only a charred spot on the ice to remind them of the fire, a little streak of dawn came sifting along with the snow, and with the light came the "whre-ee-e-ah!" of the ship's siren.

The wind had shifted and brought them the sound they had been tuning their ears all night to catch. It gave them the direction of the ship. With a shout, they broke from the lee of the wall and started into the teeth of the storm.

In the rush, O'Neil stepped into a snow-covered blow-hole and fell. He tried to scramble to his feet, but sank back with a broken ankle.

The Sculpin paused long enough to toss him on his shoulder and plunged on toward the sound of the whistle that came trembling through the air at ten second intervals. He caught the men at the crevass, where there was only the one pike with which to leap the open water.

He could not leap a five-year fissure with a cripple in his arms, so he ordered the men to the ship, and to send help.

He laid O'Neil in the lee of a pressure-ridge and sat down beside him to wait. "I'm tired," he admitted to himself, "but I ain't afraid."

The ice under them was groaning with the heave of the water. Across the floe raced a reverberatory crackle as the seams strained with the pulse of the sea. Down the wind came the boom of monster ice-cakes churned in the waves.

"She's breaking," whispered O'Neil,

faintly. "We're done; we're done."

"Alive, to take my place," muttered the Sculpin, as he clambered to his feet, and wrestled O'Neil to his shoulder.

He lumbered across the ice with his burden, tripped and fell; regained his feet, and plunged forward with a dogged persistence. The crack widened; but in the shadow of a berg, it was veiled with a thin rubber-ice. Putting down the now silent body, he tested the ice with his foot. The waves coiled out in widening circles until they touched the other side. It was thin ice, very pliable, the result of the extreme cold on the sheltered salt water.

With O'Neil in his arms, he might not be able to keep on the crest of the wave their weight would make. If the wave got ahead of them, left them in the hollow, the rescue party would find only the hole, when they came.

His feet were numb with frost, but he took the crumpled form in his arms and made his big try. With a running start, he glided onto the ice and ran. He heard it snapping behind him. He knew it was broken;—that the water was in the hollow, rushing after him, licking at his heels. He felt the ice sinking beneath him and, with a supreme effort, he threw the body in a sprawling heap to the firm bank of the other side. As his feet broke through the shivering glare, he pitched forward and gripped the flipper of a dead seal, frozen to the floe. His body sank into the frigid water, but he dragged himself out.

He gathered O'Neil's body into his arms and stumbled blindly toward the faint sound of the ship's horn. The air seemed filled with siren sounds, and he staggered as he walked, staggered and fell; fought his way to his feet again, reeled in a circle, lurched on a few shambling steps, and sank to the ice. He dragged himself forward until his body shielded O'Neil from the wind—and lay still.

When the rescue party found them, the blizzard had banked the snow against the Sculpin's body; but O'Neil was still alive in the shelter of the human wind-brake.

In the Sculpin's pocket they found his commission as lieutenant in the Newfoundland first contingent for overseas duty, and a newspaper clipping:

WOUNDED IN THE HAND

Lieut. Burns, first Newfoundland, is dishonorably discharged—wounded in the left hand.

Hand wounds in war are common, and nearly all alike: through the palm of the left hand, with powder marks around the hole. The military authorities know such wounds are self-inflicted—a sign of lost nerve. In desperation, the cowards shoot themselves in the left hand in order to be sent out of the trenches.

Lieut. Burns has branded himself for life as a craven. His protests are in vain; His Majesty's troops must not be commanded by cowards."

They found the powder-marked hole in the Sculpin's palm and buried him with his gloves on.

The whole gang enlisted as a "pals platoon," and are now with the old crew, "somewhere in France." They know now that the Sculpin got the brand hurling a bomb from the trench. It exploded just after it left his hand. A fragment drove through the palm, and the powder finished the indictment. The wound was not serious; but the military records did not show that he was left-handed.

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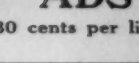

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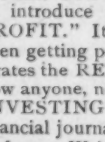

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